Beggar on Horseback

Kaufman and Connelly

NUNC COGNOSCO EX PARTE

THOMAS J. BATA LIBRARY
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/beggaronhorsebac0000geor

BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK

BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK

A Play in Two Parts

BY

GEORGE S. KAUFMAN
AND
MARC CONNELLY

SUGGESTED BY
"Hans Sonnenstoesser's Hohlenfahrt"
BY PAUL APEL

BONI AND LIVERIGHT
PUBLISHERS :: :: NEW YORK

PS 3521 .H727B4 1924

Copyright, 1924, by
BONI & LIVERIGHT, INC.

Printed in the United States of America

"Beggar on Horseback" was produced by Winthrop Ames at the Broadhurst Theatre in New York, Feb. 12, 1924, with the following cast:

Dr. Albert Rice	Richard Barbee
Cynthia Mason	Kay Johnson
Neil McRae	Roland Young
Mr. Cady	George W. Barbier
Mrs. Cady	Marion Ballou
Gladys Cady	Anne Carpenger
Homer Cady	Osgood Perkins
A Butler	Pascal Cowan
Jerry	Edwin Argus
A Business Man	Maxwell Selser
Miss Hey	Spring Byington
Miss You	Fay Walker
A Waiter	Charles A. House
A Reporter	James Sumner
A Juror	Paul Wilson
A Guide	Walker M. Ellis
A Sightseer	Norman Sweetser
A Novelist	Bertrand O. Dolson
A Song Writer	Chappell Cory, Jr.
An Artist	Henry Meglup
A Poet	Hamilton McFadden

224972

THE PANTOMIME—DURING PART 2

A Kiss in Xanadu

The music of the pantomime, and all other music used in the play, composed by Deems Taylor

H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Xanadu
GEORGE MITCHELL

H.R.H. the Crown Princess of Xanadu
GRETHE RUZT-NISSEN

First Lady in Waiting.....SPRING BYINGTON

First Lord of the Bedchamber.....DRAKE DEKAY

A Lamplighter .....TOM RAYNOR

A Policeman .....EDWIN ARGUS

Cæsar and Pompey ....J. HAMILTON and H. JAMES

Stage Manager, A. O. Huhn

Assistant Stage Manager, Wallace Stuart

NOTE:

"Beggar on Horseback" is the property of Winthrop Ames, 244 West 44th St., New York City. It may not be acted, either by professionals or amateurs, without permission and the payment of a royalty. Public readings and radio broadcastings are likewise prohibited.

PREFACE

Some of us have been made a trifle ill by a surfeit of those magazines which nourish a hungry multitude with helpful articles on how unshod newsboys become corporation presidents. We have been further wearied by the more characteristic American comedies which regard evening clothes and abrupt wealth as quite essential parts of a happy ending. It is to please us, therefore, that the Messrs. Kaufman and Connelly have written this gay, engaging and derisive comedy called "Beggar on Horseback."

They offer it merely as a relieving antidote to the worship of material prosperity. It is a play written in the distaste that can be inspired by the viewpoint, the complacency and the very idiom of Rotarian America. It is a small and facetious disturbance in the rear of the Church of the Gospel of Success. When staged in the very capital of the Land of Go-Getters, its gesture is as defiant as that made on a not dissimilar occasion by one Barbara Frietchie.

Down in Washington sits a wise doctor who would tell them that they are having a bout with nothing less formidable than nature itself, that they

are running counter to a folkway and might as well campaign against a climate. Nearer home, perhaps, have been neighbors who contributed an ironic smile to the spectacle of two young playwrights attacking material prosperity in a comedy which, during its first Spring, was never content with receipts of less than twenty thousand dollars a week. One recalls inevitably that their fellow craftsman, Channing Pollock, made himself into a gratified millionaire by the process of writing a play called "The Fool" of which the hero was an unworldly fellow who tried to live like Christ. Yet it must be recorded that the authors of "Beggar on Horseback" wrote as fastidiously and as austerely as though success meant nothing to them. Of course that is no bad way in which to lure that tassel—gentle to one's hand.

George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly are two wags from Times Square who have done most of their work for the theater together. It has been a fortunate and a fertile partnership. Their collaboration has produced such considerable gayeties as "Dulcy," "To the Ladies," and "Merton of the Movies," bright and adult and civilized comedies all three, and each agreeably associated in the theater with a young and authentic talent. Just as these earlier pieces served, and were served by, such able and ascendant players as Lynn Fontanne, Helen Hayes

and Glenn Hunter, so now Roland Young is part and parcel of "Beggar on Horseback," which was produced for the first time in Wilmington on January 25, 1924, and came a fortnight later to the Broadhurst Theatre in New York.

This comedy is a derivative of Paul Apel's "Hans Sonnenstoesser's Hohlenfahrt," a short play produced in Germany some ten or twelve years ago. I cannot compare the play with its German original because I never saw or read the latter, although a similar lack of preparation has not cramped the style of some of my hardier colleagues nor prevented their discoursing firmly and at length on the relationship between the two scripts. But I do know something of the manner of the adaptation. It was Winthrop Ames who bought Apel's idea and when he turned his two young neighbors loose on that idea, all they obtained from the German original was such a notion of its general scheme as Ames might have imparted to them in a ten-minute conversation across the managerial desk. Since the same bad dream acted out against an American scene was what was wanted, since a complete naturalization of the German play was the thing sought, this was, I think, the way to go about it

The principle is not new. It is the same as that which colored the advice of the sagacious showman who, in ordering the dramatization of a popular

novel years ago, bade the playwright read the novel through carefully and then throw it lightly out of the window. If this rule of adaptation were more faithfully followed, we should have fewer immigrant plays which seem to have taken out only their first papers. We should have fewer pieces purporting to be comedies of American life to which odd and incongruous shreds of alien viewpoint and accent adhere like bits of eggshell sticking to a new hatched chicken. We should escape those Parisian amours acted out against a Kansas City background. I recall an amorous drama in which the lover read a copy of the "New York Evening World" by the light of a window that looked out on the Eiffel Tower. I remember another man-heating play in which the cocotte kept up a continuous outcry in such language as this: "*Sacre bleu*, I'll say she is. I'll tell the world, *mon vieux*." These are trivial discords, of course, but they are products and symptoms of imperfect dramatic digestion. One who knows his Greenwich Village is hardened to catching Fourth Street in the act of crossing Twelfth. But a certain hopeless confusion of mind is set up when, in sauntering on Main Street, one finds that familiar thoroughfare turning unexpectedly into the Rue Canebière or running on blandly *unter den Linden*.

"Beggar on Horseback" is a dream play, an honorable descendant of "Alice in Wonderland." Such

scenes as that of the directors' meeting, the restaurant episode and the mad nightmare climax in the cells of the Art Factory (all of which scenes, by the way, have no counterpart in the play Apel wrote) flagrantly invite the kind of stylicized production which is peculiarly suitable to dream plays and which is part of that undigested lump in dramatic criticism called "Expressionism." Such experiments in that kind of staging as one encountered in "The Hairy Ape," "The Adding Machine" and "Beggar on Horseback" are invariably attributed to the German influence on the American theater, an attribution which does not matter much, although it must wring a wry smile from Arthur Hopkins, who employed precisely this technique for a kindred play called "Poor Little Rich Girl," which he produced a dozen years ago—that delightful comedy written by Eleanor Gates, a prairie girl who is about as German as "Huckleberry Finn," or a stack of wheat.

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT.

PART I

BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK

PART I

[*The scene is Neil McRae's apartment in a comfortable, run-down and not very expensive building. It is plainly an artist's room, and furnished with as many good looking things as the occupant could afford—which are not many. The most luxurious piece of furniture in the room is a grand piano, which Neil has probably hung on to with no little difficulty. It stands well down left. Down right is an easy chair—the only chair in the room that even suggests comfort—and against the rear wall is Neil's desk. In front of the desk is a swivel chair, and two or three other chairs, stiff-backed, stand around the room. At the left of the stage, near the piano, is a window, hung with chintz curtains that have seen better days—curtains which come to life here and there in great splotches of red. Some of the same stuff hangs in a centre doorway—a doorway that leads to Neil's bedroom and thence to a "kitchenette." The door into the apartment is at the right—somewhere beyond it is the elevator, and one needs only a*

look at the room to know that it is an elevator that requires four minutes to ascend the three floors.

The time is about four-thirty of a Spring afternoon. The curtain rises on the room and nothing more; then, after a second, there comes a knock on the door. The knock is repeated, then the knob is cautiously turned and the door slowly opens. Dr. Albert Rice, a young man of thirty or so, peers inquiringly into the room through the widening crack, sees no one, and enters.]

ALBERT

Neil!

[*There is no answer; he observes the room. Slightly to his surprise, he sees a sewing basket on the piano.*]

Are you married?

[*He goes up to the bedroom entrance and peers into the semi-darkness.*]

Neil!

[CYNTHIA MASON, *who seems to be about twenty-five, appears suddenly in the doorway at right. There is a moment of uncertainty as she and the doctor confront each other.*]

CYNTHIA

Are you looking for Mr. McRae?

ALBERT

Yes. The door was open.

CYNTHIA

[*Disturbed.*]

Really? Was it wide open?

ALBERT

It was closed, but it wasn't locked.

CYNTHIA

Oh!

[*There is a pause of uncertainty.*]

Was Mr. McRae expecting you?

ALBERT

No—I just got in from Chicago. Neil and I are old friends. My name is Rice.

CYNTHIA

Oh! You're not *Doctor* Rice?

ALBERT

Yes.

CYNTHIA

[*Laughing.*]

I'm so relieved! My name is Cynthia Mason, Dr.

Rice. I know a great deal about *you.* [*They shake hands.*]

ALBERT

Of course Neil never writes letters, so you've been concealed from me. You didn't know him a few months ago, did you, when I left New York?

CYNTHIA

No, only since he moved here. I live across the hall.

ALBERT

Oh, I see.

CYNTHIA

[*Looking around.*]

There's that work basket. [*She takes it from the piano, then faces the doctor again.*] I hope you'll forgive me, when I tell you why I lingered.

ALBERT

You're forgiven.

CYNTHIA

Night before last we had burglars.

ALBERT

Really?

CYNTHIA

Not on this floor—the apartment below. The poor man lost three or four suits of clothes, so——

ALBERT

[*With an understanding smile.*]

So Neil leaves his door unlocked.

CYNTHIA

Probably since early this morning. Though I'm afraid the burglar who took Neil's clothes wouldn't do very well.

ALBERT

[*With a look around the room.*]

No, I suppose not.

CYNTHIA

[*A pause; she turns, with an air of finality.*]

Well, he'll be here soon.

ALBERT

You're not going?

CYNTHIA

I must. Neil has some people coming to tea.

ALBERT

[*Bent on holding her.*]

Well—now, how do you know I'm *not* the burglar?

CYNTHIA

Because I don't believe there are such things as gentlemen burglars.

[*She drops a half curtsy; turns again toward the door.*]

ALBERT

Oh, wait! What did Neil tell you about me?

CYNTHIA

Let me see. He said you were extremely brilliant. But too versatile.

ALBERT

Brilliant, yes. But versatile—on the contrary, I'm going to become a specialist.

CYNTHIA

Sometimes I wonder what's happened to all the young men who used to become just doctors.

ALBERT

They all died of starvation.

[*There is a pause;* CYNTHIA *looks at her watch.*]

CYNTHIA

I don't know why Neil isn't here.

ALBERT

You don't expect *him* to be prompt, do you?

CYNTHIA

But he has some people coming. You may know them—their name is Cady.

ALBERT

Cady? Not the Cadys from Livingston?

CYNTHIA

Yes—*do* you know them?

ALBERT

I'm not sure—I think I used to. You know, I lived in Livingston myself, a long time ago.

CYNTHIA

So Neil told me.

ALBERT

[*Puzzled.*]

The Cadys? What are *they* coming for?

CYNTHIA

Miss Cady is Neil's pupil.

ALBERT

You mean he's giving her music lessons?

CYNTHIA

He is.

ALBERT

But he's not a teacher. [*He waits for a denial.*] *Is* he?

CYNTHIA

He *must* do something.

ALBERT

[*With a sigh.*]

Things aren't any better with him, then?

CYNTHIA

Well, he isn't ready to retire.

ALBERT

[*With a shake of the head.*]

I suppose he'll always go on this way. He's so —utterly improvident, so——

CYNTHIA

[*Rallying to his defense.*]

Well—he's really improved in that way. He may surprise you.

ALBERT

He certainly would.

CYNTHIA

He's saving money! [*Her tone changes.*] But the trouble is—he's working so hard to get it.

ALBERT

You mean giving music lessons?

CYNTHIA

Worse. You've got to talk to him—he won't listen to me. He's been sitting up night after night——

NEIL

[*Heard in the hallway.*]

Halloo!

[*He kicks open the door and enters. He is carrying a pile of books, and on top of the pile a music portfolio. He sees* ALBERT; *dumps the books abruptly into the easy chair.*]

Albert! Well, I'll be damned!

[*Tosses his hat into the bedroom; seizes* ALBERT'S *hand.*]

ALBERT

Mr. McRae, I believe?

NEIL

Where did you come from? Chicago?

ALBERT

This morning. Of course, you never told me you'd moved. How are you?

NEIL

Never felt better! Gosh, I'm glad you're back! You've met Cynthia?

CYNTHIA

Well, we've been talking. I thought I'd caught the burglar.

NEIL

Did you find him in here? [*To* ALBERT.] How did you get in?

ALBERT

[*Elaborately.*]
First I turned the knob of the door——

CYNTHIA

And, as you hadn't locked it, he had no difficulty in entering. [*She turns to the books in the easy chair.*] What are these?

NEIL

Why—just some books.

CYNTHIA

[*Takes one up.*]
"Life of Charles I." Neil!

NEIL

Well—I used to be very interested in history, and especially——

CYNTHIA

[*Severely.*]
The truth, Neil!

NEIL

I—I bought them, that's all.

CYNTHIA

Oh, Neil. After your promise!

NEIL

Well— [*To* ALBERT.] Just take a look at this binding.

ALBERT

[*Giving no encouragement.*]
Yes. I see it.

CYNTHIA

[*Determined.*]
Neil, where did you get them?

NEIL

[*Still to* ALBERT.]
There was a burglary downstairs, and this fellow lost all his clothes.

CYNTHIA

[*Resigned.*]

And you bought these books from him.

NEIL

Well—ah——

CYNTHIA

You work at these terrible orchestrations to *make* a little money, and then—did you go to bed at all last night?

NEIL

Of course I did.

CYNTHIA

Doctor, you *will* talk to him, won't you? [*She takes up her work basket.*] I'm sure he hasn't been sleeping—he hasn't been doing *anything* he should.

[*She is heading for the door.*]

NEIL

You're not going?

CYNTHIA

I am. You have people coming to tea, remember.

NEIL

Good heavens, what time is it?

CYNTHIA

Nearly five. I suppose you have everything ready?

NEIL

Why, yes—I've got—that is, I think—— [*He smiles helplessly.*] Be a darling and help me, will you?

CYNTHIA

Are you sure you have everything? [*Knowing well that he hasn't.*]

NEIL

I think so.

CYNTHIA

He thinks so. [*This to* ALBERT, *with a smile, as she goes through the bedroom doorway.*]

ALBERT

She's charming, Neil.

NEIL

Isn't she?

[*He moves his portfolio from the chair to the desk.*]

She's a designer in one of the big dressmaking firms. Did she tell you how we met?

ALBERT

No.

NEIL

She lives across the hall. [*He raises his voice for* CYNTHIA'S *benefit.*] She thinks she can play the piano.

CYNTHIA

[*In the kitchen.*]

I can!

NEIL

You cannot! [*To* ALBERT.] One night I knocked on her door and asked her to stop. She did. We've been great pals ever since. [*Calling to* CYNTHIA.] Can I help you, Cynthia?

CYNTHIA

No, nor anyone else. [*She returns.*] Do you remember when you last had any tea?

NEIL

The other day.

CYNTHIA

You have three leaves left. [*She exhibits them.*]

NEIL

[*Inspects them.*]

Four!

CYNTHIA

And did you know that your toast machine was burnt out?

NEIL

Oh, yes—I forgot. But I'm sure there's some tea —I remember—no, I used the last of it early this morning. I'll run right out—— [*He is about to start.*]

CYNTHIA

[*Holding him.*]

Neil!

NEIL

What?

CYNTHIA

Then you *were* up all night?

NEIL

Why—not exactly.

CYNTHIA

[*To the doctor.*]

He's been sitting up making orchestrations for a cheap little music publisher. Neil, it's like copying bad paintings. Doctor, you must make him stop.

NEIL

Well—I'll go out and get some tea.

CYNTHIA

No! You stay and talk to the Doctor. I'll bring

everything over from my place. [*Again she picks up the basket.*]

NEIL

I can't let you do that. Let me help.

CYNTHIA

I will not. [*She goes.*]

NEIL

[*More to himself than to* ALBERT.]
I could have sworn I had everything.

ALBERT

She'll take care of things. [*He is near the window.*] Come over here and let me see you.

NEIL

Now, you're not going to fuss over me just because I've been doing some work.

ALBERT

No. But I want to look at you. [*An orchestra, in a restaurant across the street, strikes up a jazz tune. It comes faintly through the window.*]

NEIL

Good Lord, that again!

ALBERT

What?

NEIL

That damned cabaret orchestra across the street. It begins at five every afternoon.

ALBERT

You *are* nervous, aren't you?

NEIL

Huh? No. I just don't like that music.

ALBERT

Did you work all night?

NEIL

Some of it.

ALBERT

It's bad business, Neil. [*He feels for his pulse.*] How many Cadys are coming to tea?

NEIL

Oh, did Cynthia tell you? You remember the Cadys?

ALBERT

Vaguely. I don't suppose they'd know me. Do they live here now?

NEIL

They moved East a few months ago. Gladys is my one and only music pupil.

ALBERT

[*Watch in hand.*]

Rich, I suppose?

NEIL

Lord, yes. Millions.

ALBERT

What did he make it in? [*He puts away the watch.*]

NEIL

Funny—I don't even know. Manufactures something.

ALBERT

[*Trying to remember.*]

Just the one daughter, isn't there?

NEIL

Yes. [*Adds, as an afterthought.*] There's a brother.

ALBERT

[*Recalls him, apparently none too pleasantly.*]

I remember him.

NEIL

I *had* to ask them. For heaven's sake, stay and help out.

ALBERT

[*With a laugh.*]

Well, I'll stay a little while. [*Feels for his pipe.*]

NEIL

Try to get away. [ALBERT *laughs, lightly.*] Well, what's the verdict on *me?*

ALBERT

You're just a little tired, that's all. Sort of nervous.

NEIL

Nonsense.

ALBERT

Got any tobacco?

NEIL

Right there on the desk.

ALBERT

[*Fooling with the tobacco jar; unable to open it.*]

Have you been writing *anything* of your own?

NEIL

Well, no—only snatches of things. I'm going to get back at it soon, though.

ALBERT

That's good. [*The jar in hand.*] How do you open this thing?

NEIL

[*Takes up a paper knife from the piano—a knife of ivory, scimitar-shaped, and with a long black tassel hanging from it.*]

I use this. Give it to me.

[ALBERT *hands it over;* NEIL *opens and returns it, all without a word.*]

ALBERT

[*Filling his pipe.*]

How old is the daughter now?

NEIL

Gladys?

ALBERT

Yes.

NEIL

Twenty-two or three—I don't know. Why?

[*He puts the knife back on the piano.*]

ALBERT

How soon will they be here?

NEIL

Any minute, I guess. Why all the questions?

ALBERT

I just wondered. [*Takes a medical case from his pocket and shakes out a pill.*] I want you to take one of these before they come, and another one later on.

NEIL

Good heavens, there's nothing the matter with me.

ALBERT

I know there isn't.

NEIL

What'll they do—make me sleep?

ALBERT

They'll quiet you.

NEIL

But I don't dare go to sleep. In the first place the Cadys are coming, and——

[CYNTHIA *re-enters. She is now hatless, and carries a folded table-cloth.*]

CYNTHIA

I hope you scolded him. [*She goes to the desk and begins to spread the cloth.*]

ALBERT

Not enough, I'm afraid. [*Pill in hand.*] Do you think you have a glass of water left?

NEIL

[*Starting.*]
Oh, of course!

ALBERT

No, no, I can find it. [*He goes into the bedroom.*]

CYNTHIA

[*With a glance at the portfolio.*]
You didn't let them give you more to do?

NEIL

Why, hardly any. It's all right.

CYNTHIA

It *isn't* all right. Oh, I wouldn't mind if it were something decent! But it's perfectly sickening to think of your genius being choked to death in this way!

NEIL

I'll work on the symphony soon, honestly.

CYNTHIA

And then make up for it by mere hack-work. I wish someone would subsidize you.

NEIL

That would be nice. [ALBERT *comes back with the glass of water.*]

ALBERT

Here you are! [*Gives* NEIL *pill and glass.*]

NEIL

Oh, all right. But there's nothing the matter with me. [*He takes the pill.*]

ALBERT

How was it?

NEIL

I've tasted better. [*The orchestra across the street is heard in another outburst of jazz.*] Would you believe that people actually enjoy that? Wait! I've got one here that will be next month's national anthem. [*Searches for it in portfolio.*] There aren't any words to it yet, but it's going to be called "Sweet Mamma."

CYNTHIA

Don't, Neil. Play Dr. Rice the second movement of your symphony.

NEIL

Want to hear it?

ALBERT

You bet. [*He indicates the pipe.*] Do you mind?

CYNTHIA

Not at all.

NEIL

She calls it the second movement because there isn't any first.

CYNTHIA

[*Finding it.*]

Here! [*She spreads the manuscript on the rack.*]

NEIL

You understand this is just a movement. It's—[*He sees place that needs correction.*] Oh! [*Starts fishing for a pencil.*] Of course I never have a pencil. [CYNTHIA *gets one from his left vest pocket and hands it to him.*] Oh, thanks! [*He makes the correction.*] It's just a sketch. Not finished, you know.

CYNTHIA

But it's going to be—and soon. [NEIL *starts to play, but is not far into it when the phone rings.*]

NEIL

[*Stops playing.*]

I'll bet that's the Cadys. [*Goes to the phone.*] Hello! [*To* CYNTHIA.] It is. Downstairs. . . . Send them right up, Jerry.

CYNTHIA

Good heavens, I'll have to bring the tea things in.

NEIL

Why not?

CYNTHIA

They don't want to meet me.

NEIL

Don't be foolish.

CYNTHIA

Well—I won't stay. [*She goes.*]

NEIL

I suppose I ought to clear things up a bit.

ALBERT

[*With a glance at the books in the easy chair.*] If you expect them to sit down. [NEIL *carries the books into his bedroom. He returns, counts the chairs, then tests a spindley-legged one that stands centre.*]

NEIL

I hope nobody heavy sits in this.

[*Voices are heard in the hall, and* Mr. *and* Mrs. Cady, Homer *and* Gladys *appear at the open door.* Mrs. Cady *enters first, then* Gladys, *then* Mr. Cady, *and* Homer. *Together they make up an average Middle West family. They have no marked external characteristics except that* Homer *is wearing a violent yellow tie.*]

MRS. CADY

Why, Neil!

NEIL

How are you, Mrs. Cady? Gladys.

MRS. CADY

After all these years!

GLADYS

Hello, Neil!

CADY

Well, well, Neil, my boy!

NEIL

Hello, Mr. Cady!

HOMER

Hello, there!

NEIL

How are you, Homer?

HOMER

Not so good.

NEIL

[*Feeling keenly his position as host.*]

Ah—this is Dr. Rice. Mr. and Mrs. Cady, and—Miss Cady and—Cady.

[*His voice trails off. There are the indistinct greetings that follow an introduction.*]

MRS. CADY

Doctor, did you say?

ALBERT

Yes, ma'am.

MRS. CADY

Homer, here's a doctor.

HOMER

Yes?

MRS. CADY

Homer's had a good deal of trouble from time to time. Sit here, Homer—in this easy chair. [HOMER *takes the only easy chair.*]

NEIL

[*Delinquent.*]

Oh, yes—sit down, everybody. I'm sorry I—ah——

MRS. CADY

Oh, that's all right. We'll just settle ourselves. [*She sits in the swivel chair at the desk.*]

NEIL

[*Stirring up conversation.*]

Ah—Dr. Rice comes from Livingston, too.

MRS. CADY

Really?

CADY

That so?

ALBERT

Oh, a long time ago. We moved away when I was very young.

MRS. CADY

I wonder if I—[*There is a sneeze from* HOMER]—Are you all right, Homer?

HOMER

Yes. [*Something in his tone says that he is as all right as possible, considering where he is.*]

MRS. CADY

[*Blandly finishing.*]

——knew your people?

HOMER

I don't remember them. [*You gather that* ALBERT *just couldn't have had any people.*]

CADY

[*At the telephone.*]
Mind if I use this?

NEIL

Oh, no, of course not.

CADY

Thanks. I left the office a little early. [*Takes the receiver off.*]

MRS. CADY

[*Bent on placing the doctor.*]
Let me see. *Old* Mrs. Rice——

CADY

Cortlandt 8262.

MRS. CADY

I guess you're not the same. [*There is a half-query in her voice.*]

ALBERT

Well, as a matter of fact, I moved away just after you came there.

MRS. CADY

Oh, I see.

GLADYS

[*Producing a box of candy.*]

I brought you some candy for your tea, Neil.

NEIL

Oh, thanks. [*To* MRS. CADY, *who is teetering in the desk chair.*] There's another chair if——

MRS. CADY

No, I like this. Feels like my rocking chair at home. [*She sways back and forth.*]

GLADYS

Mother's favorite chair is her rocker.

MRS. CADY

There's nothing like an old-fashioned rocking chair.

CADY

[*At the phone.*]

Let me talk to Burgess.

MRS. CADY

Mr. Cady says I'm chair-bound. Just joking, you know. [*She explains elaborately, to* ALBERT.] Mr. Cady. Says I'm chair-bound.

ALBERT

[*Just the news he was waiting for.*]
Oh, yes.

SIMULTANEOUSLY

MRS. CADY

Let me see: there were two families of Rice out there, and I remember that one of them came here, just before we left. [*She finishes in a sibilant whisper, having been shushed by her husband.*]

CADY

Burgess? Any word from 653? . . . Hush, mother. . . . Well, I'll tell you what to do. We ought to send a tracer. . . . That's right. . . . Well, I'll tell you what to do—if you don't hear by six o'clock send a tracer. That's all.

[CADY *hangs up: turns to* NEIL.]

CADY

Much obliged. When I get a foot away from a telephone I'm lost. [*He starts for the weak chair;* NEIL *makes a movement.*] What is it?

NEIL

That chair isn't very strong.

CADY

Oh, I'll be careful.

NEIL

[*Not exactly at ease.*]

We're going to have some—tea and things—pretty soon now.

CADY

[*Has taken out a cigar.*]

Match?

NEIL

[*Starting.*]

How's that?

CADY

Match.

NEIL

Oh, yes! Right here. [NEIL *lights his cigar.*]

GLADYS

[*Taking in the room.*]

See, mama, isn't it cute?

MRS. CADY

Yes, indeed.

GLADYS

There's the piano over there.

MRS. CADY

Oh, yes. [*Everybody looks at the piano.*] Neil must play something for us. [*It is Remark No.* 80 *and purely perfunctory.*]

CADY

It's certainly very nice. We've been hearing quite a bit about you, Neil.

NEIL

Is that so?

CADY

Hear you've become quite a musician since you went away from Livingston.

NEIL

Oh, I don't know.

CADY

Well, Gladys has been telling us so. So we thought we'd come and find out for ourselves. Gave up a golf game to do it, too. Play golf?

NEIL

No, I don't.

CADY

Play golf, Doctor?

ALBERT

I'm sorry.

CADY

Well, everybody ought to. Great exercise. Keeps a man fit for business. I'd make Homer do it, if he wasn't so delicate. [HOMER *shifts in his seat.*]

MRS. CADY

Comfortable, Homer?

HOMER

[*Carelessly.*]

Um-hum.

[CYNTHIA *comes in with the tea things.*]

NEIL

Oh, here we are! I—I want you to meet Miss Mason. She's brought the things over from her place.

MRS. CADY

Oh, I see.

NEIL

[*Beginning again the weary round of introductions.*]

Mrs. Cady and—of course you know Gladys——

GLADYS

Yes.

CYNTHIA

How are you, Miss Cady?

NEIL

And Mr. Cady and—another Mr. Cady. [HOMER *does not rise. Mumbled greetings are exchanged.*] Miss Mason lives—just across the hall.

MRS. CADY

Yes, so Gladys has told us. Are you a musician, too, Miss Mason?

CYNTHIA

No, I'm not, Mrs. Cady.

MRS. CADY

[*Turning to her husband.*]

Don't she make you think of Elizabeth Merkle, Fred?

CADY

Well—I see what you mean.

HOMER

[*Ever the dissenter.*]

She don't me.

MRS. CADY

Of course Elizabeth's dark, but there's something about the shape of the face. [*To* NEIL.] *You* knew the Merkles, Neil. Mr. Merkle had the skating rink.

NEIL

Oh, yes. Elizabeth was a little girl when I knew her.

MRS. CADY

She's twenty-two or three. Twenty-three, isn't she, Fred?

CADY

Yes, I guess so.

HOMER

Lizzie Merkle's crazy. She's going to marry Lou Carmichael.

GLADYS

Oh, did grandma say when it was to be?

MRS. CADY

No, I don't think they know themselves. You knew Lou, didn't you, Neil? [CYNTHIA *is serving tea.*]

NEIL

Did they live over on Pine Street?

MRS. CADY

I think they did.

HOMER

No, they didn't.

GLADYS

Hush up! They did. They lived next door to Dr. Endicott.

HOMER

They did not. They've always lived on Mead Avenue.

GLADYS

Well, I guess I ought to know. Didn't I go and meet his sister once? Remember that tall girl, mama?

HOMER

You're crazy.

MRS. CADY

Lou used to take Gladys to dances a lot.

GLADYS

He was a wonderful dancer! [*She giggles.*]

MRS. CADY

He was with the telephone company.

HOMER

[*Scornfully.*]
Charlie Ferris nearly beat him up.

MRS. CADY

Remember when he and Charlie Ferris were crazy about Gladys? This girl's had more boys crazy about her, Neil. [CYNTHIA *gives tea to* CADY.]

GLADYS

Oh, I never cared for either of them.

HOMER

You never let them *think* so.

GLADYS

[*Smugly*]
Homer!

HOMER

[*To* NEIL, *unpleasantly, as he passes tea to him.*]

No, thanks. Tea always sits on me.

CADY

Say, I hear your Uncle James is dead, Neil. Leave you anything?

NEIL

No—Uncle James never had anything.

CADY

Too bad. He was a fine man. Everybody was sorry when he moved to Boston.

MRS. CADY

He was nice.

[*To* CYNTHIA.]

We used to sing together in Sunday school when we were children.

NEIL

I remember you sang in the choir.

MRS. CADY

Mama still sings, when she lets herself go.

HOMER

We call her Galli-Curci.

MRS. CADY

[*Genially.*]

They're always joking me about my voice. But I do love old hymns. Your father was a good singer, too, Neil.

NEIL

I guess he was a better lawyer.

CADY

Yes, everybody had a great deal of respect for John McRae.

MRS. CADY

He was a beautiful character.

CADY

He'd give his money away to everybody. Afraid he never made very much, though. Lawyers don't, as a rule. Neil, did you know that when I was a young man I studied law—right in the same office with your father?

NEIL

No? Did you?

CADY

Yes, sir. Had it all figured out to be a judge—Judge Cady—till I found out what was the most a judge could make. [*Puts his tea down, almost untasted.*]

CYNTHIA

Too strong?

CADY

No. I'm not much of a tea drinker.

MRS. CADY

I guess Gladys and I are the tea drinkers in our family. We have it every afternoon. [NEIL *is opening the candy box.*]

GLADYS

Neil's going to come up and have some with us next week. Tuesday.

NEIL

Candy? [MRS. CADY *takes a piece; so does* MR. CADY.]

MRS. CADY

That's nice. We'll have some people in. I want you to see the new house. My, I don't know what the folks would say back in Livingston if they could see it. Remember our house in Livingston, Neil?

NEIL

Yes, indeed. [*He passes the candy box to* HOMER, *who waves it disdainfully aside.*]

MRS. CADY

[*Trying to be bantering.*]

You ought to. You were there enough. Every afternoon, pretty near. Neil and Gladys would play together and I'd go out in the kitchen and make candy for them. [*She rocks.*]

GLADYS

Oh, yes! Wasn't it fun, Neil?

MRS. CADY

We always saved some pieces for Mr. Cady. All the Cadys are fond of candy. Aren't they, Fred? [*She taps his knee.*]

CADY

[*Munching.*]

Guess that's right, mother.

HOMER

I'm not.

MRS. CADY

Except Homer. [*She resumes, largely to herself.*] All the Cadys eat candy.

CYNTHIA

And now—if you'll excuse me. [*Rises.*]

NEIL

Oh, you're not going? [HOMER *doesn't rise with the other men.*]

CYNTHIA

I'm afraid I must.

CADY

That's too bad.

MRS. CADY

Well, I hope we meet again.

CYNTHIA

I just ran in for a moment to be temporary hostess.

GLADYS

Goodbye, Miss Mason.

CYNTHIA

[*To* ALBERT.]

I hope I'll see you again. [*Shakes his hand.*]

ALBERT

Oh, I'll be back in a few weeks.

[*There are further goodbyes. Cynthia goes.*]

MRS. CADY

[*Looking after her.*]

She *is* like Elizabeth.

CADY

[*Noisily.*]

Well—how are things generally, Neil? Making a lot of money out of your music?

NEIL

No—with music you don't make a great deal of money.

CADY

I don't know about that. It's just like any other business. Maybe you're not giving them what they want.

MRS. CADY

I guess Neil's doing his best, aren't you, Neil?

CADY

We've all got to please the public. Eh, Doctor?

ALBERT

Oh, yes.

CADY

I've got to in my business. Of course I don't claim to know anything about music, but I think I represent about the average viewpoint. Now, what I like is a good lively tune—something with a little snap to it. As I understand it, though, you sort of go in for—highbrow music.

NEIL

It isn't exactly that.

CADY

Well, there's no money in it. You know what happened to your father.

MRS. CADY

Had to scrape all his life. [*Turns to* ALBERT.] Neil's father. Had to scrape all his life.

CADY

A young fellow's got to look out for his future, I claim—got to save up a little money.

NEIL

[*Puzzled.*]

Yes, sir.

MRS. CADY

[*Helping along what is clearly a prearranged conversation.*]

In some *business*, Mr. Cady means.

CADY

Yes. Now you take—well, my business, for example. We've always got an opening for—a bright young fellow.

NEIL

You mean—*me*—in your business?

CADY

Well, I just mentioned that for example.

NEIL

I—I'm afraid I wouldn't be much good in business, Mr. Cady.

MRS. CADY

Of course you'd be good.

NEIL

I did work once in an office, and I guess I wasn't —very——

CADY

That's all right. You'd learn. The idea is you'd be making money. Some day you'd maybe have a nice interest in the firm. 'Tain't as though you couldn't write a little music now and then in your spare time, and we'd be sort of all together. [*The jazz orchestra is heard again—this time louder.*]

MRS. CADY

Just like one big family.

GLADYS

[*Singing and swaying to the tune.*]

Oh, they're playing "The Frog's Party."

[*To Neil.*]

Come on and dance!

NEIL

I'm sorry, but I don't dance.

GLADYS

Oh, so you don't—but I'm going to make you learn. I know a wonderful teacher. [*Turns to* ALBERT.] Dance, Doctor?

ALBERT

A little.

[GLADYS *and* ALBERT *take a few turns about the room.* MRS. CADY *hums the tune, not knowing the words.*]

CADY

Great song! A man I played golf with yesterday tells me that for the first six months of the fiscal year that song'll make a hundred thousand dollars. Write something like that and you're fixed. That's music.

HOMER

We got it on the radio last night.

ALBERT

[*Politely.*]

You don't say?

GLADYS

[*Near the piano.*]

Oh, Neil!

[*The three remaining* CADYS *are grouped with* ALBERT.]

SIMULTANEOUSLY

GLADYS

[*Holds up a piece of music, as* NEIL *crosses to her.*]

What's this?

NEIL

Just something I'm working on.

GLADYS

[*Sotto voce.*]

I want to talk to you

NEIL

Oh!

GLADYS

Don't you want to talk to me?

CADY

Couple of hundred miles away, wasn't it?

HOMER

Three hundred.

CADY

Think of that!

ALBERT

It's wonderful.

MRS. CADY

I was going to ask you, Doctor, if you're related to those other Rices. There were two daughters, I think.

NEIL

Oh, yes.

GLADYS

Neil.

[*Points to a small photograph on piano.*]

NEIL

Yes?

GLADYS

[*Takes up the picture.*]

Can I have one of these?

NEIL

I'm afraid I haven't got another.

GLADYS

This was in the Musical Courier, wasn't it?

NEIL

Why, yes.

ALBERT

No, I haven't any relatives left, there.

CADY

Live in New York, now, I suppose?

ALBERT

No, Chicago. I'm just here for a flying visit.

CADY

Chicago? Don't say? Well, that's a good town.

HOMER

Chicago a good town? Huh!

MRS. CADY

It would be nice if you could come up and see us, too, Doctor.

ALBERT

Thank you, but I'm going back soon.

GLADYS

I saw it. You're pretty well known, Neil. I'm proud of you. I wish I could have this one. Only I wish it were of you alone, instead of you and this other girl, whoever she is.

[*Puts picture back.*]

NEIL

It's just a girl I met one summer.

[*A pause.*]

GLADYS

Neil?

NEIL

Well?

GLADYS

Do you like me better than you do Miss Mason?

NEIL

Well, I think she's awfully nice.

MRS. CADY

Well, do come if you can. Any day after Thursday. Both our butlers are leaving, and I can't get any new ones to come until after the holiday. But we always like to have people from Livingston drop in. I always say if you don't keep in touch with your old home town, why your old home town won't keep in touch with you.

HOMER

I never want to go back there.

CADY

Well, I don't know as I do either.

MRS. CADY

Listen to that man. And to think he was president of the Board

GLADYS

Don't you think I'm nice, too?

NEIL

Yes, of course.

GLADYS

Because, I think *you* are. You know that, don't you, Neil?

NEIL

[*Nearly choking.*]

I'm—glad.

GLADYS

So, of course, I want *you* to think *I* am.

NEIL

I—do.

GLADYS

[*Suddenly.*]

Oh! That reminds me.

[*Fishes in her hand-bag.*]

of Trade there for five mortal years.

CADY

[*Thoughtfully, to* ALBERT.]

You know, I think I've got you placed now. Was your father E. J. Rice in the lumber business?

ALBERT

No, he was an architect.

MRS. CADY

An architect — you don't say? Put up buildings, did he?

ALBERT

Yes, a few.

MRS. CADY

Put up any buildings in Livingston?

ALBERT

Why, yes.

NEIL

What is it?

GLADYS

[*Bringing out four or five small samples of colored cloths.*]

I knew I wanted to ask you something. Which do you like best?

NEIL

Why, they're all very nice.

GLADYS

But don't you like one best?

NEIL

I don't know. They're all sort of—ah—why—

GLADYS

Because I'd like to get the one you'd like.

[NEIL *is puzzled. She spreads the samples on his arm.*]

CADY

Not the First National?

ALBERT

No, he designed the Mechanics' Building, right next door.

CADY

You don't say?

MRS. CADY

Well, that's a nice building, too.

HOMER

I remember it.

MRS. CADY

Mr. Cady had his offices in the First National Building.

ALBERT

Is that so?

They're samples, silly! I'm going from here to the dressmaker's to pick one out.

NEIL

Oh, I see.

[*He removes the samples.*]

GLADYS

[*Pouting.*]

Of course if you don't care what I wear, why, all right.

NEIL

[*Not enthusiastic.*]

I do care.

GLADYS

[*Eager again.*]

Well, which one would you rather see me in? The blue?

NEIL

Yes, that would be nice.

CADY

I guess there's been quite a building boom since you were there. That whole block is pretty solid now.

ALBERT

Really?

MRS. CADY

My, yes. You wouldn't know the place.

CADY

Yes, sir! I guess there's been a good many million dollars invested there in the last five years.

ALBERT

You don't say?

MRS. CADY

Mr. Cady put up a building himself.

GLADYS

I like the pink one myself.

ALBERT

That so?

CADY

Just a warehouse. Of course we still have a plant there——

HOMER

[*Heard by himself.*]
It's half past, pop. [*Rises.*]

CADY

Yes, I guess we'll have to be going. [*Rises.*]

MRS. CADY

Ready, Gladys? [*Rises.*]

GLADYS

Yes, mama. [*Starts, then turns back to* NEIL.]

SIMULTANEOUSLY

GLADYS

[*Suddenly, to* NEIL.]
Oh, Neil!

MRS. CADY

Well, now, don't forget, Doctor! Come and see us, if you can.

NEIL

Yes?

GLADYS

I won't go home for dinner—if you don't want me to.

NEIL

Well, I did sort of think I'd do some work—

GLADYS

I'll go with *you* to a new restaurant I just heard about! I'll tell you what! I'll only be at the dressmaker's a few minutes. Then you can meet me.

NEIL

Well, I don't know exactly how I'll be fixed.

GLADYS

I'll telephone you the minute I'm finished.

ALBERT

Thank you.

CADY

Or have a round of golf with me some time. Play golf?

ALBERT

I'm sorry, I don't.

CADY

I remember—I asked you before.

HOMER

[*Impatient.*]

Oh, come on!

MRS. CADY

Just a second, Homer. Gladys is talking.

HOMER

She's always talking.

MRS. CADY

[*To* ALBERT, *with a laugh.*]

NEIL

But, Gladys, I'm going to be tied up, I'm afraid, and——

GLADYS

Well, anyway, I'll phone.

Just like a brother, isn't he?

CADY

Well, goodbye, Doctor.

ALBERT

Goodbye, Mr. Cady.

CADY

Come on, Gladys.

GLADYS

All right. [*To* NEIL.] I'll telephone you from the dressmaker's when I'm through.

MRS. CADY

And, Neil—you're coming Tuesday, remember.

NEIL

Oh, thanks. I'm sorry I couldn't have had a nicer party for you.

MRS. CADY

It was elegant. Only next time we come, you must play something for us.

NEIL

I'll ring for the elevator.

MRS. CADY

Oh, that's nice. Come on, Homer.

[NEIL, MR. CADY *and* MRS. CADY *pass into the hall.*]

GLADYS

Goodbye, Doctor.

ALBERT

Goodbye, Miss Cady.

[GLADYS *follows them out;* HOMER *lingers with the Doctor.*]

HOMER

What about him? Do you know him well?

[*He takes out a box of powders.*]

ALBERT

Who? Neil?

HOMER

Yeh. Is he all right?

ALBERT

Why?

HOMER

Well, I just like to know things about a possible brother-in-law.

ALBERT

I see.

HOMER

Gladys is nutty about him. Thinks he's artistic, my God! And did you hear the old man? Just because his father was John McRae!

[*Puts the powder on his tongue—takes a glass of water.*]

MRS. CADY

[*In the hall.*]

Hurry, Homer!

HOMER

[*Calling.*]

All right!

[*He swallows the words, drinking at the same time.*]

So long. Well, I hope it don't happen.

[*He strolls out.*]

ALBERT

So long.

[*The voices of the departing guests are heard in the hall. Neil returns; looks back into the hall.*]

NEIL

What was all that about?

ALBERT

Oh, nothing in particular.

NEIL

How did you like the Cadys?

ALBERT

They seem to be all right. They must be richer than mud. Did you hear Mrs. Cady on her "butlers"?

NEIL

No.

ALBERT

I never heard of anybody having more than one butler before, but the Cadys seem to have 'em in pairs.

NEIL

[*Laughing.*]

I haven't been to their house yet. I'm going next week, though.

[*His glance going to the door.*]

Say! Homer's a dirty dog, isn't he?

ALBERT

[*Thoughtfully.*]

Neil, I want to talk to you.

NEIL

Good Lord, again?

ALBERT

In the first place, I want you to go to bed.

NEIL

At half past five o'clock?

ALBERT

You haven't slept for days.

NEIL

But I can't go to bed now. I've got work to do.

[*A second's pause.*]

You don't mean I'm sick?

ALBERT

No, but you need rest. I want you to put on your dressing gown and lie down for a while. And then take another one of these.

[*Produces the pills.*]

NEIL

But I can't afford to go to sleep. I told you that. I've got work to do.

ALBERT

You can't work tonight

NEIL

I must.

ALBERT

On those orchestrations?

NEIL

Yes.

[*A pause.*]

ALBERT

Neil.

NEIL

What?

ALBERT

I want to talk to you about something else.

NEIL

Good heavens!

ALBERT

All right, but—somebody has to.

[*Neil looks up, sensing something important.*]

What are you going to do about your work?

NEIL

Huh?

ALBERT

Your *real* work, I mean. How much have you done since I went away?

NEIL

Well, what you heard. And Miss Mason and I are working out a little pantomime together. It's going to be a lot of fun——

ALBERT

How much of it is written?

NEIL

A lot. About half, I guess.

ALBERT

About half a movement of a symphony and about half a pantomime.

NEIL

I still have to eat.

ALBERT

But Neil, don't you see—you're wasting your genius!

NEIL

Genius, my hat!

ALBERT

You're wasting the best years you'll ever have doing odd jobs just to keep alive. You've got to be free to write.

NEIL

Well, maybe some day I'll write a popular song and make a million.

ALBERT

If you ever did you'd either burn it or sell it for ten dollars. You'll never make any money, Neil. You know that as well as I do.

NEIL

Then what's the answer? Are you going to subsidize me?

ALBERT

I wish to God I could! But there's no reason why you shouldn't subsidize yourself.

NEIL

What do you mean?

ALBERT

I mean the Cadys.

NEIL

What are you talking—Oh, don't be foolish!

ALBERT

Why is it foolish?

NEIL

Gladys would never—why, you're crazy!

ALBERT

Am I? Think back. How did she behave this afternoon? And Papa Cady? "Nice little share in the business?" And—well, I know what I'm talking about.

NEIL

You mean you're seriously advising me to ask Gladys Cady to marry me?

ALBERT

That's exactly what I'm doing. She's a nice girl, and pretty. You'd have comfort and money and time——

NEIL

[*Interrupting, with growing excitement.*]

Well, what about *me?* Do you think money and music and time would make up for everything else? No, sir! I'd rather keep on living right here—just as I am now—all my life long.

ALBERT

Now, now! Don't get temperamental! If you'll just——

[CYNTHIA *opens the door.*]

CYNTHIA

May a poor girl call for her dishes?

NEIL

I'm sorry—I should have brought them over.

CYNTHIA

[*Detecting a note in his voice.*]

Neil, there's nothing the matter?

ALBERT

I've been trying to persuade him to rest.

[*To* NEIL.]

Won't you go in and—get ready?

NEIL

I—I can't now.

CYNTHIA

Neil, please.

[*A pause.*]

NEIL

All right. But don't go away. I want to talk to you.

[*He goes into the bedroom.*]

CYNTHIA

He *is* difficult.

ALBERT

Yes, he is.

CYNTHIA

I'm glad you've taken charge of him.

[*She is collecting the tea dishes.*]

ALBERT

He'll be all right. Just needs sleep, that's all. I'm not worrying about him physically so much as—well, spiritually.

CYNTHIA

I know. I've been worrying about it for weeks.

ALBERT

You do see his genius, don't you?

CYNTHIA

Oh, yes! He has it, if anyone ever had.

ALBERT

And this hack-work—it must be killing his spirit.

CYNTHIA

When I think of his keeping on, year after year! And he's such a babe-in-arms about practical things. He *does* so need——

[*She hesitates.*]

We must do something, mustn't we?

ALBERT

Yes, we must.

[*A pause.*]

There *is* a possible way out, you know.

[*A pause.*]

CYNTHIA

[*Slowly.*]

Yes, I know.

[*A longer pause.*]

ALBERT

It's the only way, I'm afraid.

CYNTHIA

Oh, I've been thinking about it ever since she began coming here! You really *do* think it's the right thing for him? The wisest?

ALBERT

I'm sure of it.

CYNTHIA

But could he be happy?

ALBERT

That's the only way he *can* be happy, permanently —if he's free to write his music. That's the most important thing in the end.

CYNTHIA

It seems—and yet I'm afraid you're right.

ALBERT

We only hurt people by being sentimental about them. That's one of the first things a doctor learns. Let's put this through. Will you?

CYNTHIA

Oh, I couldn't!

ALBERT

You can do more than I can. You'll be here, and

I've got to go away. And anyway, a woman can always do more than a man about this sort of thing.

[*Holds out his hand to her.*]

For Neil's sake.

[*He takes a step away from her as he hears* NEIL *returning.* NEIL *comes back, wearing a dressing gown.*]

That's right! Now!

NEIL

Of all the rot! Putting a grown man to bed at half past five!

ALBERT

Who ever accused you of being a grown man? Here!

[*Produces a pill.*]

Be brave. One swallow and it's over.

NEIL

Oh, all right—give it to me.

ALBERT

Here!

[NEIL *takes it.*]

And another before you go to bed. I'll put them here.

[*He takes up his hat.*]

NEIL

You're going?

ALBERT

Got to—dining uptown.

[*Taps* NEIL *lightly with his gloves as he passes.*]

I'll look in in the morning. You'll be all right then. Good night, Miss Mason.

CYNTHIA

Goodbye, Doctor.

[ALBERT *goes.*]

NEIL

[*To* CYNTHIA, *who is gathering the last of her dishes.*]

He's been talking to you about me, hasn't he?

CYNTHIA

Why—you and other things.

[*Not looking up.*]

NEIL

What did he say?

CYNTHIA

Don't you wish you knew—curiosity!

NEIL

I *do* know. I know exactly. He said the same thing to me. He said I was a failure—practically. That I'd have to depend on other people all my life.

CYNTHIA

Neil, you're just exciting yourself. You're tired, and you know he wants you to——

NEIL

No, wait! We've got to talk about this, you and I. He said more than that. He said that I ought to ask Gladys Cady to marry me.

[*A pause.*]

Well! You don't seem—surprised.

CYNTHIA

No, I'm not.

NEIL

Don't you even think it's—funny, a little bit?

CYNTHIA

No.

NEIL

Cynthia!

[*Looks at her for a moment and then with a cry.*]

Oh, Cynthia—dear!

[*Takes her hand.*]

CYNTHIA

Don't, Neil!—*Please* don't!

NEIL

But Cynthia, don't you know—without my telling you—that I love only you and no one else?

CYNTHIA

Oh, Neil, please!

[*Then, with an attempt at lightness.*]

This is so sudden!

NEIL

[*Hurt.*]

Oh, Cynthia, please don't!

CYNTHIA

Oh, please don't *you!*

NEIL

You know I love you, Cynthia! Of course you know; you couldn't help knowing! I thought maybe you—don't you, at all, Cynthia?

CYNTHIA

[*Regaining control of herself.*]

Neil, let me tell you something. I *have* seen that you were growing to care for me, and I've—I've tried to think what I ought to do about it.

NEIL

Do about it! What can you do about it if——

CYNTHIA

You can do lots of things—if you're practical and sensible.

NEIL

Oh, my dear!

CYNTHIA

I said to myself, I think he's beginning to care about me more than he ought to, considering how we're both situated, and that nothing could come of it. And if I stay here I mightn't be sensible either. So, I'm going away.

NEIL

What!

CYNTHIA

I'm going to move uptown and live with Helen Noland. I'm going tomorrow.

NEIL

Cynthia—do you mean that you don't care about me at all?

CYNTHIA

Oh, yes, I do, Neil. I care about you very much. I think you're a great artist.

NEIL

Artist!

[*He turns away from her.*]

CYNTHIA

And I think it would be the greatest possible misfortune for your music for you to go on this way, living from hand to mouth. So—when Dr. Rice suggested that you marry Miss Cady, it seemed to me a very sensible thing to do.

NEIL

[*Faces her again.*]

Cynthia—do you know what you're talking about?

CYNTHIA

Perfectly.

NEIL

You can't mean that music or no music I ought to marry Gladys.

CYNTHIA

I think you ought to do just that for the sake of your music.

NEIL

[*Hurt.*]

Oh! You're like Albert! You think my music is the only thing about me that's worth while!

[*He again turns away.*]

CYNTHIA

Oh, Neil!

NEIL

[*Continuing.*]

It never *was* me that you cared about—only the music.

CYNTHIA

I want you to be happy, Neil.

NEIL

[*Laughs mirthlessly.*]

I certainly got it all wrong, didn't I? [*A pause.*] Well, goodbye, Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

Oh, Neil! Don't say goodbye like that.

NEIL

What other way is there? You're all being so sen-

sible and practical. I might as well be practical and sensible too. [CYNTHIA *starts to speak, chokes up, goes out—stifling her tears. After a moment* NEIL *turns and sees that she is gone.*] My music! [*Then, less viciously.*] My music! [*The phone bell rings.* NEIL *looks toward it—plainly,* GLADYS *has finished at the dressmaker's. For a second he hesitates; then he makes up his mind and strides to the phone. There is grim determination in his voice, from the opening greeting.*] Hello, Gladys!

GLADYS

[*Over the phone.*]
Hello, Neil!

NEIL

Well, is the fitting over?
[*He stifles a yawn; the pills are beginning to work.*]

GLADYS

Yes, but it wasn't a fitting.

NEIL

Well, whatever it was.

GLADYS

I took the pink one.

NEIL

The pink one. That's fine.

GLADYS

Oh, you don't care which at all!

NEIL

Of course I care which.

GLADYS

Can you meet me?

NEIL

Well, I don't think I can do that.

GLADYS

What?

NEIL

I say I can't go out. The doctor says I must stay in for a while.

GLADYS

Oh, my goodness! Are you sick?

NEIL

Oh, no. Just tired. Really, that's all. I have to—sleep for about an hour. [*He is growing momentarily more listless.*]

GLADYS

Oh, dear!

NEIL

Well, why don't you come up here instead?

GLADYS

Shall I?

NEIL

Of course.

GLADYS

Why?

NEIL

Well, there's something I want to say to you, to ask you—something we all want to—I mean something I want to ask you——

GLADYS

I wish I knew!

NEIL

Maybe you do know. We thought—that is, I thought—how would you like to marry a great composer? [*The receiver nearly falls from his grip.*]

GLADYS

Oh, darling! Do you mean it?

NEIL

Sure I mean it.

GLADYS

Of course I'll marry you!

NEIL

Would you, honestly?

GLADYS

Yes, indeed!

NEIL

Well, that's fine. We'll show them, won't we?

GLADYS

Who?

NEIL

Oh, everybody.

GLADYS

Can I tell them?

NEIL

Yes, tell them all. Homer and——

GLADYS

Oh, darling, I'm so happy!

NEIL

[*His tone dull.*]
Well, I'm happy, too.

GLADYS

Let me hear you say "Sweetheart."

NEIL

Do I have to say it?

GLADYS

Of course.

NEIL

[*Barely audible.*]
Sweetheart.

GLADYS

Go ahead.

NEIL

Didn't you hear it?

GLADYS

No.

NEIL

[*Viciously.*]
Sweetheart!

GLADYS

Do you love me?

NEIL

Of course I do.

GLADYS

Well, I'll come over in about an hour.

NEIL

All right. [*A sleepy pause.*] In about an hour. You come, and—I'll sleep for an hour. I'll—sleep. [*He tries to replace the receiver, but is too sleepy.*

It dangles from its cord. NEIL *rouses himself from the chair with difficulty.*] And that's that! [*Across the street the jazz orchestra begins again to play "The Frog's Party." It seems louder than before—already* NEIL'S *imagination is causing it to swell. He wheels toward the window.*] Now go ahead and play! [*He staggers to the easy chair and drops into it.*] Play the wedding march, damn you! Play the wedding march! [*The tune resolves itself into a jazzy version of Lohengrin's Wedding March. At the same time* NEIL *finally collapses into the chair, and the lights of the room begin to go down. As it grows dark the music swells. Then, after a moment, it begins to grow light again—but it is no longer* NEIL'S *room. It is a railway station, with the arch of Track 37 prominently visible, and other arches flanking it at the side. A muddled train schedule is printed on the station walls, with strange towns that never existed.* NEIL'S *piano, however, has remained where it was, and so has his easy chair. Then, down the aisles of the lighted theatre, there comes suddenly a double wedding procession. One section is headed by* MR. CADY *and* GLADYS—MR. CADY *in golf knickers and socks, knitted vest, and frock coat, with a silk hat prominently on his arm.* GLADYS *is the gorgeously attired bride, bearing proudly a bouquet that consists entirely of banknotes. Behind them stream four ushers—spats, frock coats, and high*

hats, to say nothing of huge bridal veils, draped over their heads. If you could peer beneath their veils, however, you would find that all four of them look just alike. The procession that comes down the other aisle is headed by MRS. CADY *and* HOMER. MRS. CADY *wears a grotesque exaggeration of the dress that* NEIL *has seen her in, and* HOMER'S *yellow tie has assumed tremendous proportions. Behind* MRS. CADY *and* HOMER *are four bandsmen. Like the ushers, they all look alike, all wearing bridal veils, through which they play their instruments.*]

[*At the foot of the stage the processions halt; the music stops.* ALBERT *appears from nowhere in particular; he has turned into a minister.*]

GLADYS

Oh, Neil!

NEIL

[*In his sleep.*]

Huh?

[ALBERT *gently rouses him.*]

ALBERT

Neil! Did you forget that you were being married today?

NEIL

Oh! Why—I'm afraid I did. [*He looks wonderingly at the railway station, then turns and sees*

GLADYS.] Oh, hello, Gladys! I'm sorry. [*The two processions stream up onto the stage. The ushers and the bandsmen line up behind the* CADY *family.*]

GLADYS

Neil, I want you to meet my ushers. They're all boys I used to know pretty well. [*As* GLADYS *begins the introductions the entire thing turns into a rhythmic chant, to an orchestral accompaniment.*] This is Alf and this is Georgie.

NEIL

Glad to meet you!

ALF

Glad to meet you!

GLADYS

This is Steve.

NEIL

I'm glad to meet you!

GLADYS

This is Fatty.

NEIL

How d'you do?

GLADYS

This is Lou.

LOU

I'm glad to meet you!

NEIL

Glad to meet you!

LOU

Glad to meet you!

GLADYS

And this last is Cousin Harry.

HARRY

Glad to meet you!

NEIL

How d'you do?

CADY

Hurry up, now! Let's get at it!

ALBERT

Take this man to be your husband?

[*A trainman, in uniform, enters through the gates of the railway station.*]

TRAINMAN

Wolverine, for Monte Carlo!

ALBERT

Have and hold him . . .

GLADYS

Yes, I do!

[*They all begin to rise and fall on their toes, to the beat of the music.*]

ALBERT

All your worldly goods and chattels. . . .

[*A trainboy, carrying the usual magazines, chocolates, etc., comes through the gates.*]

TRAINBOY

Latest magazines and papers!

MRS. CADY

Going off to leave her mama!

HOMER

Say, it's cold here! Ah, ker-choo!

[*The ushers begin to march around* GLADYS *and* NEIL, *faster and faster.*]

CADY

Train pulls out in just a minute!

ALBERT

Both for richer and for richer. . . .

TRAINMAN

Pasadena, Paris, London!

ALBERT

Better, worser . . .

GLADYS

Sure I will!

CADY

Special car Appolinaris!

[GLADYS *is kissing the ushers as they march.*]

TRAINBOY

Nothing sold after the train leaves!

MRS. CADY

Don't know *what* I'll do without her!

TRAINMAN

Show your tickets!

HOMER

Ma, keep still!

CADY

Get aboard! I'll tip the preacher!

TRAINMAN

Right this way, please! Right this way, please!

TRAINBOY

Huyler's chocolates and bon-bons!

MRS. CADY

Oh, my baby!

HOMER

Oh, good Lord!

TRAINMAN

Lenox, Palm Beach, Narragansett!

ALBERT

I pronounce you—got the ring, Neil?

ALL THE USHERS

Bet he's lost it! Bet he's lost it!

GLADYS

Here's another!

TRAINMAN

All aboard!

[*The procession starts through the gates*—ALBERT *and* CADY *first, then the rest of the* CADYS, *then the ushers and the bandsmen. As they all file through the ushers continue the chant, calling out in unison:*]

Well, goodbye! Congratulations!
Goodbye, Gladys! Goodbye, Gladys!
Send us back a picture postal!
Hope you're happy!
Well, goodbye!

[GLADYS *tosses her bouquet back to them; the ushers scramble for the banknotes. As the last of the procession disappears through the doors the lights die down. A moment later they come up again, revealing a row of white marble columns, with crimson curtains hung between them.* NEIL'S *piano, however, is still incongruously in the left corner, and his easy chair stands at the right. Immediately* NEIL *and* GLADYS *enter through side curtains.* NEIL *is still wearing his bathrobe—a somewhat sad spectacle amid all this grandeur.* GLADYS *is no longer in bridal costume, but wears a pleated dress—an exaggeration of the dress that she has worn in real life, with great pleats several inches thick.*]

GLADYS

We're married, Neil!

NEIL

Yes.

GLADYS

I'm your little bride.

NEIL

My little bride.

GLADYS

[*Giggles.*]

Isn't it all just too wonderful? [*Runs into his arms.*] This is our beautiful home—see! [*The curtains behind the front columns part, revealing a magnificent interior consisting entirely of more marble columns and velvet curtains.*] You're going to have everything you've always needed! Mama and papa both say so!

NEIL

Oh! Do they?

GLADYS

Yes, indeed! You just wait—they'll be here any minute!

NEIL

They're coming here?

GLADYS

Of course they are! There're a lot of people coming—all coming to see our beautiful new home! Wait a minute—I'll show you! [*Calls.*] Butlers! [*Two butlers appear. They are exactly alike.*] Announce somebody!

THE TWO BUTLERS

Mrs. Cady and her chair and knitting!

[MRS. CADY *enters with a rocking chair at-*

tached to her. She begins knitting immediately. The two butlers depart.]

MRS. CADY

Two little lovebirds! Gladys and Neil! Gladys and Neil! Are they happy? Oh, my dear, you never *saw* anyone so happy! I was saying to Mr. Cady, "Well, Mr. Cady, what do you think of your little daughter now? [*She sits.*] How's this for a happy family?" And Mr. Cady says to me, "Well, I never would have believed it." And I says to Mr. Cady, and Mr. Cady says to me, and I says to Mr. Cady, and Mr. Cady says to me, and I says——

NEIL

Stop! [MRS. CADY *stops.*] So—so you're my wife's mother?

GLADYS

Why, of course she is! I think she's a pretty nice mother-in-law, don't you? Most people don't like their mothers-in-law, but I think *she's* pretty nice.

NEIL

But is *she* going to be—always——

GLADYS

Yes, indeed! Won't it be lovely? And that isn't all! [*Calls.*] Butlers! [*Four butlers enter.*]

THE FOUR BUTLERS

Mr. Cady, her father!

[MR. CADY *enters. He is in complete golf attire, and there is a telephone attached to his chest. As he enters the butlers depart.*]

CADY

[*Into the telephone.*]

Yep! Yep! Hullo! Well, I'll tell you what to do! Sell eighteen holes and buy all the water hazards. Yep! Yep! Hullo! Well, I'll tell you what to do! I expect caddies will go up any time now. How's the eighth hole this morning? Uh-huh. Well, sell it in three. Yes, sir. That's fine. Yep! Yep! Hullo! Well, I'll tell you what to do! Buy——

NEIL

No, no! [CADY *stops; looks at* NEIL.] You must stop—both of you! Do you know me?

CADY

My son! My new son! Well, Neil, how's the nice music and everything? Making a lot of money?

NEIL

Are we all going to live together?

GLADYS

Yes, indeed, darling.

CADY

Yes, indeed.

MRS. CADY

Yes, indeed.

GLADYS

And that isn't all. [*Six butlers enter. Of course they are all alike.*] I've *another* surprise for you!

THE SIX BUTLERS

Her brother, Homer. He makes me sick.

FIRST BUTLER

I don't think *he's* sick at all. [*The butlers go.* HOMER *enters—the yellow tie is bigger than ever.*]

HOMER

Oh, there you are, you dirty dog! I'm on to you! You married her just because Dad's got a lot of money, and you think you're going to have a cinch. But if you think you're going to get all of Dad's money, you're mistaken, because I'm going to get my share and don't you forget it.

[*He makes straight for the easy chair, sits in it, and sneezes.*]

MRS. CADY

Now, Homer! Homer's sick.

CADY

Yes, he's sick.

GLADYS

It's all right, dearest.

NEIL

It isn't all right. I don't want the money. All I want to do is write my music. That's what I want to do—work. Do you think I'll be able to?

GLADYS

Why, of course you will, dear. We've just had this whole room done over for you to work in.

MRS. CADY

It's awfully pretty, Neil.

CADY

Cost a lot of money, too. [*His phone rings.*] Hello! . . . No—wrong number! [*He hangs up.*]

GLADYS

Don't you just love it, Neil, keeping house together? Say "Sweetheart!"

NEIL

[*Automatically.*]

Sweetheart.

GLADYS

And next week we're going to have everything done over in some *other* color. Here are the samples—the samples. [*She produces another set of samples, larger than those used in real life.*] Now which color would you like? It's going to be whichever color you like.

NEIL

Why, any one. [*He removes the samples from his arm.*]

HOMER

Make him pick one! Make him pick it!

GLADYS

Here, I'll tell you! You stop in and get them matched! Get some of this one, and some of that one, and maybe some of the other one—on your way home from business tomorrow. It'll give you something to do.

NEIL

Am I going to business tomorrow?

CADY

Yes, sir! Start right in at the bottom and work up. Learn all the ins and outs. Lots of people think

the ins and outs don't amount to anything; but you can't get anywhere in business without them.

NEIL

But if I have to go to business tomorrow I'd like to work on my symphony now—if you'll only go.

HOMER

Huh! The symphony!

GLADYS

That old thing!

CADY

That's no good!

MRS. CADY

I wouldn't have it in the house!

NEIL

But it is good—and I've got to finish it.

CADY

Highbrow music—that's what it is.

NEIL

Well, then, I'll work on the pantomime—that's not so highbrow. [*He goes to the piano.*]

MRS. CADY

For my part I like hymns. There's nothing like the old familiar hymns. [*She sings—"Oh, Blessed Be the Tie That Binds."*]

GLADYS

Anyhow, you can't work now. It's tea time!

MRS. CADY

[*To the tune of the hymn.*]

Yes, tea time! It's tea time! It's tea time!

CADY

So it is. [*Into his phone.*] Hello! . . . Don't disturb me now—I'm busy. . . . Tea!

CADY

Quite a crowd coming this afternoon.

MRS. CADY

Yes, coming to meet Neil! Yes, Gladys and Neil! Gladys and Neil!

GLADYS

Now, Neil, you be nice to everybody. I want you to make a nice impression. [*Eight butlers enter.*]

THE EIGHT BUTLERS

A friend of her family's. [*The butlers go. No*

one enters, but apparently the CADYS *see someone. They greet the invisible guest.*]

GLADYS

How do you do?

CADY

How do you do? [*They bring her down to* MRS. CADY.]

MRS. CADY

How do you do? Oh, what a nice new ear trumpet!

GLADYS

I'm so glad you were able to come! [NEIL *peers, trying his best to see what it is all about.*]

MRS. CADY

Well, it's wonderful to see you again!

GLADYS

Doesn't she look well, mama?

MRS. CADY

You're the picture of health! No one would ever say *you* had an operation. I say—no one would ever say you had an operation. Yes, it always does it if you were heavy before. Oh, was it a year ago? Well, tempus does fugit, as Homer says. You remember Homer?

HOMER

I said hello.

MRS. CADY

Homer's sick.

GLADYS

Oh, Neil! I want you to meet an old friend of mama's. She's deaf. You'll have to talk loud.

[*Ten butlers enter.*]

THE TEN BUTLERS

Another friend of the family's! [*The butlers go.*]

GLADYS

[*Greeting the newcomer.*]

How do you do?

CADY

How do you do?

GLADYS

So glad to see you again. And little Hattie! Oh, look, mama! [CADY *and* GLADYS *bend over, as though greeting a child.*]

MRS. CADY

Why, if it isn't little Hattie! Look, Gladys! Isn't she cunning?

GLADYS

Isn't she? Those cute little curls! Do you want to meet your great big cousin Neilie? Neil, darling,

this is your little cousin Hattie. Isn't she a big girl? Say something cute to her. [GLADYS *turns away from* NEIL *and he passes his foot over the spot where the child is supposed to be.*]

[*Twelve butlers enter.*]

THE TWELVE BUTLERS

A great many other friends of the family.

FIRST BUTLER

And all pretty terrible, if you ask me. [*They go.*]

CADY

Hello, Alf! You remember Mrs. Cady?

HOMER

Hello, Fatty.

MRS. CADY

How do you do?

CADY

Say, I called you up a couple times but couldn't get any answer.

GLADYS

Why, how do you do, Alf? I'm awfully glad you were able to come. Oh, Neil! I want you to meet an old friend of papa's. He's known me ever since I was—how high? Yes, but you couldn't lift me now.

[*The invisible guest tries to lift her and fails. She giggles.*]

[*Butlers enter with imaginary trays.*]

MRS. CADY

And now we'll have some nice tea to drink.

HOMER

[*Probably to* FATTY.]

He married Gladys for her money.

MRS. CADY

And then Neil will play for us.

GLADYS

Oh, hello! Haven't seen you in a long time! No, I guess I wasn't engaged then.

[*It is a Babel. The* CADYS *are all speaking together, moving around and greeting guests.* NEIL *moves through it all, walking through guests, passing his hands through the butlers' trays—bewildered.*]

CADY

Oh, hello, Ralph. I want you to meet my new son-in-law. Neil, this is Mr. Umn.

GLADYS

Oh, have you been out to California? Did it rain much?

CADY

Yes, he's going to be very valuable to me in business, too.

HOMER

I'll bet he's rotten.

CADY

But after all there's nothing like business. It'll all be his when I retire—his and Homer's, his and Homer's. [*Slaps* NEIL *on back.*]

[*The following four speeches are spoken simultaneously.*]

MRS. CADY

Well, Miss Mmmm, you know Mmm, don't you? He's a cousin of John's who knew Francis very well. She's Ted's aunt. Yes. It's such a long time since you've been to see us. Gladys is always saying: "Mama, why is it Mrs. Mmm doesn't come and visit us, or why don't we go out and see her?" and all like that. You know Mrs. Mmm, don't you? You've become very plump, or you've become very thin. You don't mind my not getting up, do you? Mr. Cady always says I'm chair-bound. But that's his way of making a joke. He's always making a joke. You know Neil, of course. Would you like to have

Neil play for us? Would you like to have Neil play for us? Neil, play for us.

HOMER

Look at him, the dirty dog! He married her for her money all right, but if he thinks he's going to get it he's got another think coming. Pop's going to put him in the business! Huh! He thinks he's going to get the business, too. Well, I'll show him—the dirty dog! He isn't going to get the business away from me—not while I'm alive and kicking. All because he's a musician. Yes, he thinks he plays the piano. Well—let him play it and see if I care. I dare him to play it. Go on and play for us.

MR. CADY

Well, well, well! You know Judge Mmm of course. Old man, I want you to meet the Judge. Yes, they've got a very beautiful home here. Would you like a cocktail, eh? Yes, sir! Well, Judge, how's everything been going? Say, you know Mr. Mmm, don't you? How are you? How have you been all these years? Have a cocktail—that's the boy. Yes, she's a big girl now. Grown up—married. That's her husband there. That's the one I bought for her. Very talented. I'll get him to play. Neil, we'd like to hear you play. Come on, Neil, play something on the piano.

GLADYS

Oh, how do you do, Aunt Gertrude? You know Willie, of course. Willie, you remember Aunt Gertrude. Aunt Gertrude, you remember Willie. Yes, this is our beautiful home. My husband's very talented. No, you didn't interrupt him a bit. He's awfully glad you came. He wasn't going to do anything this afternoon. Anyway, we always have tea. And if it isn't tea, it's something else. We're always having such a good time, Neil and I. Yes, that's my husband there. He plays the piano beautifully. Shall I get him to play? I think he would if I ask him. Oh, Neil, darling, play something. Please, Neil! Neil, for my sake, you'll play, won't you?

[MR. *and* MRS. CADY, GLADYS *and* HOMER *reach the "Come on and play" lines simultaneously.*]

THE CADYS

Play something for us! Play something for us! Play something for us!

NEIL

[*In quiet desperation.*]

All right. [*Crosses to piano, seats himself and turns on them.*] I'll play, but I'll play what I want to—and I don't think you'll like it.

[*He plays—music that is soft and flowing, and reminiscent of* CYNTHIA. *The lights fade on*

the CADYS *and their reception; the curtains fall. Through the window by the piano comes* CYNTHIA.]

NEIL

[*As he continues playing.*]

Cynthia! I thought that would bring you—I hoped so.

CYNTHIA

Of course, Neil, dear.

NEIL

Cynthia, it was a mistake! I'm terribly unhappy!

CYNTHIA

I'm so sorry, Neil. Because I want you to be happy, always.

NEIL

But I can't be happy with these people. I should have married you, Cynthia. I wanted to, you remember? But you wouldn't. And now it's too late.

CYNTHIA

Yes, it's too late. And I'm sorry, too.

NEIL

I don't want you to be sorry, Cynthia. I don't want you to regret anything. It was all my own fault. [NEIL'S *music turns to jazz as he plays.*]

CYNTHIA

Oh, Neil, don't let your music do that! [*She begins to draw back into the window.*]

NEIL

[*Desperately, as the music becomes more and more jazzy.*]

I can't help it! It's these people. I'm trying—but I can't help it. [CYNTHIA's *image begins to fade.*] No—no! Don't leave me, Cynthia! I need you! Don't leave me with these people! They don't understand! They never can understand! [*But* CYNTHIA *is gone now.* NEIL *ends the jazz music with a treble crash, and buries his head on the keyboard. Immediately* MR. CADY *enters—his hat on and a morning newspaper in his hand.*]

CADY

[*As he passes.*]

Hurry up, Neil! Mustn't be late for business. [*An elevator man, the same who was the trainman during the wedding scene, enters from the other side and meets* MR. CADY *at centre.*] Good morning, Jerry.

ELEVATOR MAN

Good morning, Mr. Cady. Express elevator going up! Watch your step!

[NEIL *looks up. There is no elevator, but this*

time even NEIL *is persuaded, and he believes that he sees it. Four business men, all with hats and newspapers, and all looking just alike, enter one at a time and step into the imaginary elevator.*]

CADY

[*To the first of them.*]

Good morning! Made it in twenty-eight minutes this morning!

FIRST BUSINESS MAN

Good morning! I got the eight-six this morning!

SECOND BUSINESS MAN

Good morning! I missed the seven-forty-three.

THIRD BUSINESS MAN

Good morning! I always take the nine-two.

FOURTH BUSINESS MAN

Good morning! I thought you were on the eight-sixteen. [NEIL *gets into the car; the men huddle together.*]

STARTER

[*Clicking his signal.*]

All right! Twentieth floor first stop!

CADY

No, sir, I wouldn't sell under a million five! No, sir, a million five! Oh, good morning, Neil!

NEIL

Well, I'm starting.

CADY

Good boy, Neil! I want you to meet some of my associates. This is my son-in-law, gentlemen. Just bought him for my daughter. Mr. Canoo, statistical department.

FIRST BUSINESS MAN

Four out!

[*As* Mr. Cady *thus introduces him the* First Business Man *walks out of the elevator, and goes off, paying no attention to* Neil, *who nods at his retreating back.*]

CADY

Mr. Deloo, traffic department.

SECOND BUSINESS MAN

Five out! [*He goes.*]

CADY

Mr. Meloo, tax department!

THIRD BUSINESS MAN

Six out! [*He goes.*]

CADY

Mr. Beloo, general department.

FOURTH BUSINESS MAN

Eight out. [*He goes.*]

CADY

Well, well, Neil, starting in to work? You'll like it. You'll learn the ins and outs in no time. Hey! Wait a minute. I said nine out! [*He goes.*]

NEIL

Excuse me, Jerry! Can you tell me where I can learn the Ins and Outs?

STARTER

Ins and Outs Department! Room three hundred and thirty-three and one-third. Try and find it. [*He goes.*]

NEIL

Thank you.

[*The curtains between the marble columns at right part. A small office is disclosed.* Miss Hey, *a stenographer, is typing at a small desk behind a railing.*]

NEIL

I beg your pardon?

MISS HEY

Well?

NEIL

I want a pencil.

MISS HEY

[*Still typing.*]
What is it?

NEIL

I want a pencil.

MISS HEY

Who sent you?

NEIL

I don't know. But I have to have a pencil. I worked in a place like this once before. I had a great deal of difficulty getting a pencil then, I remember.

MISS HEY

It's just as hard to get one here.

NEIL

I thought it would be. I suppose there's a lot of red tape to go through.

MISS HEY

[*Turning toward him.*]

Yes. Now as I understand it, you want a pencil.

NEIL

That's right.

MISS HEY

Of course you've filled out a requisition.

NEIL

No, I haven't. A piece of paper, isn't it? [*She hands him a tremendous sheet of paper. It is about twenty by thirty inches. He studies it.*] What I want is a pencil. There's a place for that to be put in, I suppose?

MISS HEY

[*Wearily.*]

Yes—where it says: "The undersigned wishes a pencil to do some work with." How old are you?

NEIL

Thirty-two.

MISS HEY

[*Taking the paper away.*]

That's the wrong form. [*She gives him another —a blue one this time.*] Parents living?

NEIL

No.

MISS HEY

What did you do with your last pencil?

NEIL

I didn't have any.

MISS HEY

Did you have any before that?

NEIL

I don't think I ever had any. [*He indicates the form.*] Is that all right?

MISS HEY

It isn't as regular as we like, but I guess it'll do.

NEIL

What do I do now? Go to someone else, don't I?

MISS HEY

Oh, yes. Sometimes you travel for days.

NEIL

Are we all crazy?

MISS HEY

Yes. [*She resumes typing.*] You might try Room E—right down the corridor.

[*The curtains close over her, and the curtains at the left simultaneously open, revealing another office, just like the first. Another stenographer,* MISS YOU, *is at work on a typewriter.* NEIL *approaches her, requisition in hand.*

NEIL

Is this Room E?

MISS YOU

[*Mechanically.*]

Did you have an appointment?

NEIL

No—you don't understand. I'm trying to get a pencil.

MISS YOU

Well, what do you want to see him about?

NEIL

[*Handing over the requisition.*]

It's this. Somebody has to sign it.

MISS YOU

[*Takes requisition.*]

Oh! [*Looks at it.*] Mr. Bippy! The man is here to see about getting a pencil or something.

NEIL

It *is* a pencil.

MISS YOU

Did you see Mr. Schlink?

NEIL

Yes.

MISS YOU

Mr. Woodge?

NEIL

Yes.

MISS YOU

Mr. Meglup?

NEIL

Yes.

MISS YOU

What did *they* say?

NEIL

Why, they seemed to think it would be all right.

MISS YOU

[*Calls again.*]

Oh, Mr. Bippy! [*To* NEIL.] Belong to the Employes' Mutual Mutual?

NEIL

Oh, yes.

MISS YOU

Cady Golf and Building Fund?

NEIL

Yes.

MISS YOU

Well—all right. [*She stamps the requisition with an elaborate machine, which rings a bell as it works. She hands the paper back to* NEIL.]

NEIL

Oh, thanks. Do I get a pencil now?

MISS YOU

Oh, no! It has to be O.K.'d by the President. All requisitions have to be O.K.'d by the President.

NEIL

Is he around here some place?

MISS YOU

Oh, no! He's in a big office. Just keep going until you find a great big office.

NEIL

Where?

MISS YOU

Oh, somewhere in the new building. Mr. Bippy!

[NEIL *turns away. The curtains close.*]

NEIL

The new building. A big office.

[*The centre curtains open, revealing a larger office.* MR. CADY, *seated at a long table, is dictating, in alternate sentences, to* MISS YOU, MISS HEY, *and to a dictaphone which stands before him.*]

[NEIL *tries to attract* MISS HEY'S *attention.*]

SIMULTANEOUSLY

NEIL

[*To* MISS YOU.]

I beg your pardon. . . . [*To* MISS HEY.] I beg your pardon . . . would you mind if I—is this the President's office? Excuse me. . . . Excuse me.

MISS HEY

[*To* NEIL.]

Well, what is it?

CADY

[*Dictating.*]

And so beg to state—yours of the 19th instant—hoping to receive your valued order—yours received and would say—our Mr. Mmm will call on you—in re our No. 2160 — yours sincerely—annual sales convention—beg to state—beg to state—beg to state—

NEIL

I want to see the President.

MISS HEY

What do you want to see him about?

NEIL

pursuant to your instructions of the 13th ultimo—F.O.B. our factory—beg to state—beg to state—beg to state—as per your terms and specifications — would say—would say——

[*By this time, hearing* NEIL'S *voice,* CADY *turns.*]

CADY

Why, Neil!

NEIL

Here I am—at work!

CADY

Yes, sir! Business! Big business!

NEIL

Yes. Big business. What business are we in?

CADY

Widgets. We're in the widget business.

NEIL

The widget business?

CADY

Yes, sir! I suppose I'm the biggest manufacturer in the world of overhead and underground A-erial widgets. Miss You!

MISS YOU

Yes, sir.

CADY

Let's hear what our business was during the first six months of the fiscal year. [*To* NEIL.] The annual report.

MISS YOU

[*Reading.*]

"The turnover in the widget industry last year was greater than ever. If placed alongside the Woolworth Building it would stretch to the moon. The operating expenses alone would furnish every man, woman and child in the United States, China and similar places with enough to last for eighteen and one-half years, if laid end to end."

CADY

How's that?

NEIL

It's wonderful!

CADY

And wait for September 17th!

NEIL

Why?

CADY

That's to be National Widget Week! The whole country!

NEIL

That's fine, but what I came up about——

CADY

Never mind that now—we've got more important things. Conferences, mostly.

[*To* Miss Hey *and* Miss You.]

Any good conferences on for today?

MISS HEY AND MISS YOU

[*Together.*]

One at 3:19 this afternoon. [*They go.*]

CADY

That's fine! Ever been to a conference, Neil?

NEIL

No, but I've heard a lot about them.

CADY

They're great! You make speeches and decide things, and nobody can get in while they're going on.

[Miss You *and* Miss Hey *re-enter excitedly.*]

MISS YOU AND MISS HEY

All ready! They're going to start the conference, the conference, the conference!

[*They rush out.*]

CADY

Fine! Come right in, gentlemen!

[*Half a dozen business men enter. They wear clothes that suggest fatness and prosperity. They walk in stiffly, in a line, repeating the phrases "Overhead," "Turnover," "Annual Report," "Overhead," "Turnover," "Annual Report." They sit, in stiff poses.*]

We are going to have a conference! [*Calls off.*] Bolt the doors, out there! Gentlemen—this is our annual quarterly meeting.

[*He drops a gold piece in front of each man.*]

I want to introduce a young man who has been showing great promise in our factory. I don't know what he will have to say to you——

NEIL

I know what to say! [*Rises.*] I remember now—I know exactly what to say!

CADY

Gentlemen, Mr. Neil McRae!

[*As* NEIL *rises to speak the men all fall into mechanical positions, reminiscent of the board of directors pictures in the advertisements.* NEIL *pounds the table occasionally during his speech, but there is no sound.*]

NEIL

I know you must be surprised to see so young a man stand up before you, but I have *trained* myself to occupy the position I am now in. I have learned my facts. That is how I happen to own my own home. It simply took up my spare time in the evenings. Then, one day, the head of the factory came through the room where I happened to be working on a very difficult piece of machinery. "Who is that?" he asked the foreman. "He seems to be brighter than the others." "Not at all," answered the foreman. "He has simply applied himself and I think we must raise his pay, if we want to hold him." A few weeks later I was able to solve in five minutes a problem that had puzzled the best brains in our organization. I am now the head of my department, and my old foreman is working under me.

[NEIL *sits; there is applause; the men lean over and shake his hand, congratulating him.*]

BUSINESS MEN

Wonderful! Wonderful!

CADY

I knew he could do it! Gentlemen, he has saved us millions!

FIRST BUSINESS MAN

Why, he is going to be the biggest man in the organization.

OTHERS

Yes! The very biggest!

FIRST BUSINESS MAN

What do you say to signing up with us for ten years at half a million dollars a year?

SECOND BUSINESS MAN

And becoming sales manager?

CADY

How about a bonus?

FIRST BUSINESS MAN

Yes, a bonus!

SECOND BUSINESS MAN

Here's my check for one hundred thousand dollars!

CADY

And here's mine! Two hundred thousand dollars.

FIRST BUSINESS MAN

And mine for one hundred thousand!

OTHER BUSINESS MEN

And mine—one hundred and fifty thousand dollars!

NEIL

Oh, thank you, thank you!

[*He looks at the checks; they are of various-colored paper—pink, blue, yellow.*]

It's an awful lot of money, isn't it?

CADY

A million dollars!

NEIL

A million dollars!

CADY

Well, gentlemen, that was a dandy conference!

FIRST BUSINESS MAN

One of the best!

CADY

Let's have another!

SECOND BUSINESS MAN

Yes, another.

[CADY *hands out gold pieces again as the curtains close in.* NEIL, *however, has stepped*

out of the scene and stands facing the audience. Curtains fall behind him.]

NEIL

Just think, a million dollars.

[*He looks at the checks in his hand, but they have turned into samples of colored cloth.*]

Blue and pink and yellow. Blue and yellow and pink. I was to match them. *I* know! I was to match them for——

GLADYS

[*Heard in the distance.*]

Oh, Neil!

NEIL

For Gladys! [*Then, mechanically.*] Sweetheart!

[GLADYS, *resplendent in evening dress and wrap, joins him.*]

GLADYS

Did you have a hard day at the office, Neil?

NEIL

Here they are. It's a million dollars—I think.

GLADYS

Oh, good. I always knew you'd be a big success, Neil.

NEIL

[*Dully.*]

But I'm not doing what I want to do. My music —I want to write my music.

GLADYS

Oh, not now! It's time to go somewhere! We're going to dance!

NEIL

No, no! I've got to write my music. I want to go home now!

GLADYS

Oh, nobody ever goes home. We're going to go and dance!

NEIL

But we've got to eat dinner first!

GLADYS

Of course! We're going to eat right here!

NEIL

In this restaurant again? But we were here last night, and the night before. You don't want to come here every night, do you?

GLADYS

Why, of course I do! Suppose it *is* expensive, you can afford it now! And nobody comes here but the

best people! We'll come here every night from now on! They have the nicest little lamps on the tables!

[*A check-room boy enters from one side and a headwaiter from the other. A second glance reveals the fact that the headwaiter is* ALBERT. *The check boy takes* GLADYS'S *wrap and* NEIL'S *bathrobe.*]

ALBERT

Bon soir.

[*Holds up two fingers.*]

How many, please?

NEIL

Two.

ALBERT

Two?

NEIL

[*Counts them.*]

Two.

ALBERT

Two?

NEIL

Why, hello, Albert!

ALBERT

Hello, Neil!

NEIL

Oh, yes! You were a waiter at college, weren't you? You know Gladys?

GLADYS

Of course.

[ALBERT *and* GLADYS *shake hands. Then* ALBERT *immediately becomes again the formal waiter.*]

ALBERT

How many, please?

NEIL

Two.

ALBERT

Two?

NEIL

[*Looks around to see if a third has mysteriously appeared.*]

Yes—two.

ALBERT

I will see if I can find you a table. [*He consults his chart.*] All our reserved tables are reserved.

[*The centre curtains part, revealing a gaudy cabaret interior. In the centre, at the rear, is a window, set in a frame of wrought iron. There is a single table, set with much fancy glassware and two table lamps of the sort so dear to* GLADYS'S *heart. As this scene is re-*

vealed an unseen orchestra strikes up the jazz tune, "The Frog's Party."]

Ah! Right this way, please! Here is a nice one—right by the window!

[*He seats them with an elaborate flourish, simultaneously uttering the meaningless ritual of headwaiters everywhere.*]

Yes, Madame! Yes, sir!

[*A cigarette girl, Spanish in attire, enters and circles around the table.*]

GIRL

Cigars and cigarettes! Cigars and cigarettes!

[ALBERT *presents the menu, a huge affair, to* NEIL.]

GLADYS

See, Neil? Isn't it wonderful? [*She sways to the music.*] Order! He's waiting! Hurry up—you've got to order!

NEIL

[*Scanning the card.*]

I—I can't decide right away.

GLADYS

Oh, that music! I can't stand it any longer! [*She rises and seizes* ALBERT.] Dance?

[*She whirls around the table with him, to the*

accompaniment of the jazz tune and the cigarette girl's chorus of "cigars, cigarettes."]

ALBERT

[*When the dance is over.*]

Perhaps Madame would care for some Bordelaise à la Bordelaise, or some Bordelaise à la Bordelaise, or some Bordelaise à la Bordelaise.

GLADYS

Why, yes—I'd like that!

ALBERT

And what will Monsieur have?

NEIL

[*Studying card.*]

What *is* Bordelaise à la Bordelaise?

ALBERT

Very nice, sir.

NEIL

Yes, I know, but what is it?

ALBERT

It's served in a little round dish—very nice.

NEIL

Can't I find out what it is?

ALBERT

I'll see if anybody knows, sir. [*He turns his back.*]

GLADYS

Neil!

NEIL

Well?

GLADYS

People don't do that—making a scene in a restaurant!

NEIL

I only want to know what it is.

GLADYS

But you must pretend that you *do* know! *That's* the thing!

[ALBERT *turns back to* NEIL.]

ALBERT

I'm sorry, sir—nobody knows.

NEIL

It doesn't matter. I'll take it.

ALBERT

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

[*Four waiters enter, with dishes.*]

GLADYS

Oh, here's dinner!

[*The waiters circle the table, clanking the lids of their dishes as they exhibit the food. They go slowly at first, then faster and faster, in time to the constantly accelerating music.*]

NEIL

[*Springing up.*]

Stop! I can't stand it!

[*The waiters halt in their tracks; the music stops.*]

Is it going to be like this always?

GLADYS

What?

NEIL

Our life!

[ALBERT *dismisses the waiters.*]

GLADYS

Why, I think it's wonderful! You're going ahead being a big success in papa's office, and every night we'll go out and dance! You'll have to learn!

NEIL

I won't dance! I don't want to dance! I wouldn't ever have had to dance if I hadn't married you!

[*It gives him a thought.*]

If I hadn't married you——

GLADYS

Well, I don't care whether you dance or not. *I'm* going to! Albert——

[*She rises and seizes* ALBERT; *they dance off.*]

If you hadn't married me you'd have starved to death—starved to death—starved to death——

[*Her voice dies down in the distance as she and* ALBERT *dance off to the accompaniment of the jazz tune. As* NEIL *starts the next speech the jazz tune slowly changes into the* CYNTHIAN *theme, and at the same time the gaudy cabaret changes into a sunny cottage.*]

NEIL

I don't think so. I might have been poor, but we'd both have work to do. It's a small house, I know, but the sun finds it the first thing every morning. And flowers live longer in our windows than anywhere else, because she cares for them so.

[*The wrought-iron window has turned into a simple thing of chintzes; chintz curtains appear in the doorways, and a box of jonquils*

takes its place at the foot of the window. The table no longer contains restaurant silver and electric lamps, but is simply furnished with a few breakfast things, with a vase of jonquils to keep them company. The place is flooded with sunlight.]

NEIL

[*Calling.*]
Cynthia!

CYNTHIA

I'm coming!

NEIL

Are you coming, or must I use force?

CYNTHIA

It's the toast machine. You sit down and begin.

NEIL

As though I ever begin without you! Besides, I have something beautiful for you.

[CYNTHIA *enters, bringing a tray laden with breakfast.*]

See what I've done!

CYNTHIA

What?

NEIL

Nothing at all! Merely created an utterly beautiful morning!

CYNTHIA

You did? I started it an hour ago.

NEIL

Perhaps; but see those little powder-puff clouds? *They* weren't there ten minutes ago.

CYNTHIA

They *are* nice, darling. I didn't think you were so clever.

NEIL

And wait till you see the sunset I'm planning.

CYNTHIA

You can't beat last night's. What a scarlet!

NEIL

It blushed because we flattered it so.

[*A pause.*]

CYNTHIA

Darling.

NEIL

What?

CYNTHIA

A letter.

[*They stare at the envelope corner.*]

NEIL

Didn't you dare open it?

CYNTHIA

No. But let's be brave.

[*They hold hands and take a long breath.*]

Now—one, two, three!

[*They tear the letter open; read it in silence.*]

Do you believe it? [*The voice is ecstatic.*]

NEIL

No! Do you?

CYNTHIA

Darling!

NEIL

Darling!

CYNTHIA

But it *must* be real—it's typewritten.

CYNTHIA AND NEIL

[*Reading in unison.*]

"Your symphony will be played by our orchestra on December the tenth."

NEIL

Darling!

CYNTHIA

Darling! They'll applaud and applaud! You'll have to come out and bow!

NEIL

I won't!

CYNTHIA

You'll have to have a new dress suit!

NEIL

And you'll have to have a new evening dress—yellow chiffon, too. I can do their damned orchestrations now. I can do a hundred of them between now and October.

CYNTHIA

No, you won't!

NEIL

But, my youngest child, we must continue to eat.

CYNTHIA

But, my dear, we're extremely wealthy. Have you seen my new housekeeping book?

NEIL

No.

CYNTHIA

Look! I ruled every one of those columns myself.

NEIL

[*Rises.*]

Oh! Sit down!

CYNTHIA

That's why my middle finger is all red.

[NEIL *kisses her finger.*]

This is serious. This is finance. Listen!

[*Reading from book.*]

"To Mrs. Neil McRae—debtor. Ninety-seven dozen eggs from the little red hen at seventy-nine a dozen—ninety-seven, seventy-nine. Four hundred and forty-six quarts of milk from the little dun cow at sixty-four—four hundred and sixty-four. Thirty-six pots of jonquils sold Mr. Frost, the florist, at thirty-six sixty-six—six sixty-six, sixty-six." And there's the total!

NEIL

But, Cynthia, that can't be right; it's impossible!

CYNTHIA

Add it up for yourself.

NEIL

Sixty-three and eight are forty-two——

CYNTHIA

Neil, you may be one of the minor gods, but you can't add. [*Takes pencil.*] There! Look!

NEIL

But that means——

CYNTHIA

It means we're billionaires, that's all.

NEIL

We have a hundred and seventy-seven dollars and —seventy-seven cents?

CYNTHIA

[*Nods.*]

And we can keep on just as we have been doing.

NEIL

Cynthia, do you suppose *any* two people *ever?*

[*He kisses her.*]

CYNTHIA

No, I don't believe *any* two people *ever.*

[*The voice of* GLADYS *comes out of the distance, faintly.*]

GLADYS

Oh, Ne-il!

CYNTHIA

What is it, dear?

NEIL

I thought I heard someone calling.

CYNTHIA

You did that last night at tea time. I'm frightened.

NEIL

You mustn't be—there are no fears in this house.

GLADYS

[*Louder this time—the same old call.*]
Oh, Ne-il!

NEIL

Cynthia, it's calling me!

CYNTHIA

What?

NEIL

I don't know. I must go to it.
[*He steps out of the cottage.*]

CYNTHIA

I'll go along!
[*The voice grows weaker as* GLADYS'S *gets stronger.*]

NEIL

You can't, my dear! It's too absurd.

[*The curtains close on the cottage; the jazz begins again.*]

GLADYS

Oh, Ne-il!

CYNTHIA

[*Faintly.*]

O-o-o-h!

NEIL

Yes, what is it?

GLADYS

Oh, Neil!

[GLADYS *enters—so do the check boy, the cigarette girl,* ALBERT, *and the four waiters. They stand in a line with outstretched palms.*]

NEIL

Yes, what is it?

[GLADYS, *as she speaks, dances with each waiter in turn.*]

GLADYS

Come on, sweetheart! We're going home now! Tip the waiters! Tip the waiters!

NEIL

For heaven's sake, stop that dancing!

GLADYS

I should say not! Tip the waiters! Tip them big! Tip them big!

[*She dances off with the last of the waiters.*]

[NEIL *hands out large bundles of money to the waiters, then as he proceeds along the line, he comes suddenly to* ALBERT.]

NEIL

Albert! [*The music stops.*] You got me into this! You've got to tell me how I'm going to get out of it!

ALBERT

What's the matter?

NEIL

I can't stand it! I can't live with Gladys any longer. What am I going to do about her?

ALBERT

Why, that's easy.

NEIL

What do you mean?

ALBERT

Just kill her—that's all.

NEIL

Kill her?

ALBERT

Of course. It's simple and practical.

NEIL

Do you know I never thought of that? I'm not very practical, am I?

ALBERT

No, you're not.

NEIL

Of course, I wouldn't like to do it unless it were absolutely necessary.

ALBERT

Still, it's worth thinking about.

[*He leaves him with this thought.*]

NEIL

Yes, it is.

[*The music starts;* GLADYS *and the waiter dance on again.*]

GLADYS

We're going home now! Tip the waiters! Did you tip them all? We're going home! Mama and papa will be there, and Homer!

[*The waiters are now gone, and the curtains reopen on the Cady home of pillars.* HOMER

is working a radio set; MR. CADY *is playing golf with an imaginary ball;* MRS. CADY *rocks, knits and sings. All is pandemonium.*]

CADY

Fore! Everybody, fore!

HOMER

I've got the radio fixed! Listen!

RADIO

Stock market reports! Stock market reports!
[*Ad infinitum.*]

GLADYS

Oh, Neil! Isn't it nice to be in our own home again?
[*She leaps into his lap.*]

MRS. CADY

[*Singing.*]
"Bringing in the sheaves! Bringing in the sheaves!"

CADY

Give me the niblick! Give me the niblick!

NEIL

I wish you'd all keep still.

GLADYS

What, darling? Wait! Wait!

[*Everyone subsides.*]

I hear them! The dancing teachers! The dancing teachers! *Now* you'll learn to dance.

NEIL

I won't, I tell you!

GLADYS

Oh, yes, you will! Here they are! The dancing teachers! Come in, dancing teachers! Now you'll learn to dance!

[*Six dancing teachers enter—exquisite gentlemen, one like another.*]

NEIL

Gladys, I won't!

GLADYS

You've got to! Look! Aren't they wonderful? Here he is—my husband! You're to teach him to dance!

LEADER OF THE DANCING TEACHERS

Ah! [*He circles around* NEIL, *about to pounce.*]

NEIL

Gladys, I warn you! If you go ahead with this, you'll be sorry!

GLADYS

Teach him to dance! Teach him to dance!

LEADER

[*Advancing upon* NEIL.]

You've got to dance! We teach the world to dance! We make it dance.

[*He seizes him.*]

We've got him.

GLADYS

Now you'll learn to dance!

LEADER

Now watch me! One foot out and one foot in! One foot out and one foot in!

GLADYS

He's learning to dance! He's learning to dance!

ALL THE DANCING TEACHERS

[*Forcing* NEIL'S *arms, shoulders and feet.*]

One foot out and one foot in! One foot out and one foot in! Now your shoulder, now your elbow! Now your shoulder, now your elbow! One foot out and one foot in! One foot out and one foot in. Now your shoulder——

NEIL

[*Tears himself loose.*]

No! No! I tell you! Get out! All of you!
[*They fall back.*]
Get out, every one of you! I won't learn to dance!
[*They have disappeared.*]

GLADYS

Neil!

NEIL

[*The* CADYS *meantime unconcernedly continue their customary occupations, but in subdued tones.*]
Thank God! Now I'm going to write!

GLADYS

Neil, do you realize how you're behaving?

NEIL

I do! I won't go on with this any longer! If this is to be our life together then I can't stand it! I won't! That's all—I won't!

GLADYS

Neil! After all I've done for you! After all papa's done for you!

NEIL

Done for me? You've ruined me, that's all! You've given me a lot of money that I didn't want, and you

won't let me do the one thing I want to do! Well, now I'm going to write my music! I'm going to finish my symphony!

GLADYS

Oh, no, you're not!

[*Crosses quickly to the piano and tears up the manuscript.*]

There's your old symphony! Now, what have you got to say?

NEIL

You tore it up! It was the only reason I married you, and you tore it up! All right—there's only one thing to do!

[*He takes up the paper knife from the piano—it is about twice the size that it was when the audience last saw it.*]

GLADYS

Neil, Neil! What are you going to do?

NEIL

I'm going to kill you!

[*She stands looking at him, transfixed. He stabs her, and she falls dead.*]

MRS. CADY

[*Quietly.*]

Now you've done it!

NEIL

It was her fault! She killed my work!

MRS. CADY

She was a sweet girl. The police will get you.
[*She sings "Bringing in the Sheaves."*]

NEIL

Stop that singing!

MRS. CADY

I won't!

NEIL

And stop that damned knitting!

MRS. CADY

I won't! "Rock of Ages, cleft for me."
[NEIL *stabs her. She dies, falling over backward, chair and all.*]

CADY

[*Blandly continuing his golf game.*]
This is outrageous! The idea of killing a man's daughter and wife! I'm ashamed of you!

NEIL

You're to blame, too! Just as much as the others! Look!

CADY

What is it?

NEIL

You're dead, too.

CADY

Oh!

[MR. CADY *dies.*]

NEIL

Thank God, they're out of the way! Peace! I can work at last!

THE RADIO

Stock market reports! Stock market reports!

HOMER

[*Coming from behind the radio machine.*]

Is that so? I guess you forgot all about *me,* didn't you?

NEIL

Forget you? Indeed I didn't! Homer, my boy!

[*He stabs him;* HOMER *crumples up on the floor.*]

I guess that ends that! Free! Free!

HOMER

[*Sitting up.*]

Free nothing! We'll sue you for this, you dirty dog!

[*He falls dead again.*]

NEIL

It won't do you any good! Not when they know why I did it! Not when I show them what you killed! Not when I play them my music!

[*Half a dozen newspaper reporters enter. They are dressed alike and look alike; each has a pencil expectantly poised over a piece of paper.*]

THE REPORTERS

[*Speaking one at a time, as they surround* NEIL.]

The Times! The World! The Post! The Globe! The Sun! The News! The Times! The World! The Post! The Globe! The Sun! The News!

NEIL

[*Indulging in a gesture with the paper knife.*]

Gentlemen, this is purely a family affair. I don't think I should say anything at this time, but do come to my trial.

THE REPORTERS

[*Again speaking one at a time.*]

A statement! A statement! A statement! A statement! A statement! A statement!

NEIL

Well, gentlemen, it's a long story.

[*Instantly a dozen newsboys rush down the aisles of the theatre, crying "Extra! Extra! All about the murders!" The din is terrific. Simultaneously the theatre lights up; the audience turns for a second to look at the newsboys, and in that second the curtain falls. The newsboys pass out copies of The Morning-Evening, containing a full account of the quadruple murder.*]

END OF PART I

ENING

FIRST
FINAL
EDITION
EXTRA

ted Line Shows Course Taken by Murderer.
tion of Tobacco Jar

NEW PLAY MAKES
HIT OR DOES NOT

ADVERTIS

New Wellin
"Foibles
("Foibles

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

PART II

PART II

[*The scene is now a courtroom. Against curtains of black stand three major objects of red—the same red that appeared fitfully in* NEIL'S *chintz curtains, and again as draperies for the pillars in the Cady home. Squarely in the centre is a block of twelve seats mounted on a platform. They are designed, obviously, for the jury, but instead of being the customary jurors' chairs they are of the kind found in theatres.* NEIL'S *piano and easy chair, of course, remain in their accustomed places. At the right, also vividly red, is the judge's bench, and against it leans a frame of photographs, of the sort that you see in theatre lobbies. The pictures show* MR. CADY *in various costumes and poses. The witness's box is at the left, and beside it a ticket taker's box, presided over by the ubiquitous* JERRY. *Near him is a hat-check boy recognizable as the same youth who took* NEIL'S *robe in the restaurant, and who also sold chocolates during the wedding ceremony. A couple of ushers, girls, stand chatting beside the jury box.* NEIL, *of course, is also present, walk-*

ing up and down somewhat nervously, and consulting his watch. The jurors are beginning to arrive as the curtain ascends—three or four are streaming in. To NEIL'S *surprise they all turn out to be dancing teachers.*]

TICKET TAKER

[*As the curtain ascends.*]

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!

[*He takes the tickets of the jurors, returns the stubs, and drops the remainder into his box.*]

CHECK BOY

Check your coat! Check your coat!

1ST JUROR

I guess we're early.

NEIL

Excuse me, but are you some of the jurors?

2ND JUROR

We certainly are.

NEIL

But—but you're dancing teachers, aren't you?

1ST JUROR

Best in the world.

NEIL

Are you going to try me? My music?

1ST JUROR

That's what.

NEIL

But it doesn't seem fair. I'm afraid you'll be prejudiced against something really good.

[*The* SECOND *and* THIRD JURORS *meet and automatically shake hands.*]

2ND JUROR

Hello, Ed!

3RD JUROR

Hello, Ed!

2ND JUROR

Well, you old son-of-a-gun!

3RD JUROR

Well, you old son-of-a-gun!

2ND JUROR

Glad to see you!

3RD JUROR

Glad to see you. [*They put their hands in their pockets simultaneously.*]

2ND JUROR

Fine! How's every little thing?

3RD JUROR

Fine! How's every little thing?

2ND JUROR

Well, glad I saw you!

3RD JUROR

Well, glad I saw you!

2ND JUROR

Goodbye, Ed!

3RD JUROR

Goodbye, Ed!

1ST JUROR

[*At the frame of photographs.*]

Say, who's this?

NEIL

That's the judge. It's the opening night of my trial, you know. That's the way he appeared in several famous cases.

2ND JUROR

[*Joining them and pointing to a picture.*]

Oh, yes! That's the way he looked in the Wat-

kins trial. He was terrible good. Did you see it?

[*A fourth juror is shown to a first row seat by an usher.*]

1ST JUROR

No, I was out of town.

[*Points to another picture.*]

There he is in the Ferguson case! Gosh, he was good in that!

NEIL

Yes, I heard he was.

2ND JUROR

Was he funny?

1ST JUROR

Funny? He had that courtroom roaring half the time.

2ND JUROR

I don't know another judge in the country who can deliver a charge to a jury like he can. Pathos, comedy, everything.

1ST JUROR

They say this will be the best trial he's ever done. I hear they were sold out last Monday.

[*More jurors are entering.*]

TICKET TAKER

Tickets, please!

HAT-CHECK BOY

Coats checked! Check your coat!

[*The* THIRD JUROR *presents his ticket stub to an usher.*]

USHER

Other aisle, please!

[*He crosses to the other side of the jury box and presents the stub to the other usher.*]

USHER

Other aisle, please!

[*He returns to the* FIRST USHER.]

USHER

Right this way!

[*She indicates a seat in the middle of the box.*]

3RD JUROR

[*Looking at the stub.*]

Ain't this an aisle seat?

1ST USHER

No, sir. Fourth seat in.

3RD JUROR

After paying all that money to a speculator!

[*He takes his seat in the middle of the back row.*]

4TH JUROR

There ought to be a law against them. [*Other jurors are being seated.*]

[NEIL, *at the footlights, catches the attention of the orchestra leader.*]

Now, the overture to the trial, please.

[*The orchestra plays the overture—a few bars of cheap musical comedy strains, the modulation from one tune to another being most elaborate. As the orchestra plays, more jurors are seated, leaving empty only the seat next the Judge's bench for the foreman, and another in the middle of the first row. The jurors look at their programs, talk, adjust opera glasses, etc. As the overture ends,* ALBERT *enters, a camera slung over his shoulder.*]

NEIL

Why, hello, Albert!

ALBERT

Hello, Neil!

NEIL

What are you doing here?

ALBERT

I'm covering the trial.

NEIL

"Covering" it? For a newspaper?

ALBERT

[*Nods.*]

I'm a reporter on the Illustrated.

NEIL

Oh, yes! You used to write, didn't you?

ALBERT

I understand they're going to try some of your music?

NEIL

Yes. You'll give it a fair criticism, won't you—in the paper?

ALBERT

In what paper?

NEIL

Why, your paper.

ALBERT

The Illustrated? We don't use any writing. It's an *illustrated* paper. Didn't you ever see it—in the subway?

NEIL

Of course! I remember—just pictures. But how do people know what they are?

ALBERT

Oh, we always have a few simple words, saying what the picture is about. A good many of our subscribers can read, and they tell the others.

[*A* CANDY SELLER *appears. He has the usual tray of chocolates and peppermints seen in the theatres.*]

CANDY SELLER

Chocolates and bon-bons! Fresh chocolates and bon-bons! Assorted chocolates!

1ST JUROR

[*Leaning out of the jury box.*]

Here you are. [*Buys a box of candy.*]

[*The* CANDY SELLER *goes out again. There is a sudden burst of activity in the jury box.*]

NEIL

What's all that?

ALBERT

They are getting ready to elect a foreman for the jury.

[*There is something like a cheer from the jury box. At one end a sign appears reading: JONES FOR FOREMAN. At the other*

side: SMITH FOR FOREMAN. The FIRST JUROR *rises to speak. He receives hearty applause.*]

1ST JUROR

Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen of the Fifth Jury District: I don't think anybody here has to be told at this late date that Harry J. Smith, retired, is the logical man for foreman of this grand jury. I guess everybody here knows Mr. Smith's record. You have all known him since childhood. He is an old Eighth Ward boy and will give a jury a business administration.

OTHER JURORS

Hooray!

[*The* FIRST JUROR *sits. The* SECOND JUROR *immediately demands attention.*]

2ND JUROR

Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen of the Fifth Jury District: I don't think anybody here has to be told at this late date that Thomas A. Jones, retired, is the logical man for foreman of this grand jury. I guess everybody here knows Mr. Jones's record. You have all known him since childhood. He is an old Eighth Ward boy and will give the jury a business administration.

VOICE

What about Ireland?

[*There are cries of "Throw him out!"*]

[NEIL *holds up a hand for silence.*]

NEIL

Wait! [*He goes into the witness box.*] Ladies and gentlemen of the Fifth Jury District: I know it is late to be putting forward a new candidate for foreman of this grand jury, but this is my trial, and it is my music that you're going to hear. Both of the candidates who are now up before you are good dancers, but it is only fair that there should be someone on the jury who knows good music.

JURORS

Hooray!

NEIL

Therefore, when the light on the Times Building swings on tonight, I want it to be a steady red light, which will show that we have elected the Hon. Albert Rice, of Chicago, a man of the people, for the people, and by the people, and the stars and stripes forever in the good old U. S. A.!

JURORS

Hooray!

[*Almost immediately a red light shines across*

the group, and the orchestra strikes up Sousa's march, "Stars and Stripes." The jurors, cheering, march around the jury box, carrying American flags, banners, noise-makers, etc. There are cries of "Rice Wins! Hoorah for Rice!" Albert, still mindful of the fact that he has been sent to get the news, makes ready his camera and calls on the crowd to halt.]

ALBERT

Hold it, please!

[*They stop—there is a scurrying to get into the photograph.* ALBERT *snaps them.*]

NEIL

Hold it!

[*He takes the camera and* ALBERT *automatically prepares to have his own picture taken. One of the ushers tries to slip into the picture, but* NEIL *waves her aside. He snaps* ALBERT.]

Will they be out soon?

ALBERT

Soon? They are out! [*He pulls a copy of the Illustrated from his pocket—a newspaper covered with a front page crowded with photographs, but entirely blank elsewhere.*] I brought one with me.

NEIL

They're on the front page.

ALBERT

Sure! We put everything on the front page. [*He points.*] There's a picture of the judge delivering his charge.

NEIL

But he hasn't delivered it yet.

ALBERT

Well, we have to get things quick. Our readers expect it.

[ALBERT *takes his place in the jury box. The other jurors lean over and shake his hand.*]

NEIL

The Hon. Albert Rice assumes office as thousands cheer.

[*He waits for the cheer—it does not come. He motions to the jury. They clap their hands perfunctorily.*]

ALBERT

Thank you, gentlemen.

TICKET TAKER

[*Announcing.*]

His Honor, the Judge!

[*Everyone rises. The orchestra begins the Soldiers' Chorus from "Faust." The Judge enters. He is* Mr. Cady, *his golf suit handsomely covered by an enormous red robe. He also wears an enormous Judge's wig. He throws away all dignity, however, by lifting the skirts of his gown and skipping into view. The music ends on a long note in the brasses, such as attends the finish of an acrobat's trick.* Cady *curtsies toward the jury box in response to unanimous applause, and blows a kiss. He goes up to his chair and holds the picture of a satisfied actor as he waits for another burst of applause to subside.*]

CADY

[*At last—to* Neil.]
Got a match?

NEIL

What?

CADY

Got a match?

NEIL

Oh, yes! [*He strikes a match. Although several feet away from the cigar, the cigar lights.* Mr. Cady *and jury are about to sit when* Neil *hisses.*]
Look out!

CADY

What is it?

NEIL

That chair. It isn't very strong, you know.

CADY

Oh, I'll be careful. [*He sits. The jurors sit.*]

TICKET TAKER

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!

[*The final juror enters and presents his ticket.*]

CADY

Ladies and gentlemen, I——

NEIL

[*Noticing the tardy juror.*]

Just a minute! He's late.

[*To the juror.*]

Can't you people ever be on time?

[*The tardy juror gives his seat check to an usher, who starts to lead him to his place, in the middle of the second row, but finds somebody already in it.*]

CADY

[*Blandly.*]

Ladies and gentlemen, I declare the Court— [*The confusion makes him break off again.*]

USHER

[*Leaning far over.*]
May I see your check, please?

CADY

I declare the Court——

USHER

May I see your check?

JUROR

[*Searching his pockets.*]
I had it here some place. Ah! [*Gives stub to the usher.*]

[*The usher examines the ticket stub.*]

USHER

Oh, you belong in the row ahead. This gentleman has a ticket for this seat.

[*People in both rows have to stand up while the exchange is made. It is a good deal of trouble, to put it mildly.*]

NEIL

[*To* CADY.]
All right now. I'm sorry.

CADY

I declare the court to be in session. [*There is a round of applause.* CADY *bows.*]

The business of the day is the trial of Neil Wadsworth McRae for murder.

[*There is more applause.* NEIL *is finally compelled to bow.* CADY *again addresses* NEIL *confidentially.*]

Am I right?

NEIL

Yes. And don't forget, I'm going to play my symphony. That was the reason I did it, you know.

CADY

Yes, I remember. [*He is quite conversational.*] Now, the first thing to be done, I should say, is to have the prosecuting attorney make a sort of general charge. [*To* NEIL.] What do you think?

NEIL

I guess that's right. How about it, Albert?

ALBERT

[*Looking up from his program.*]

Yes, that's right. [NEIL *nods to the* TICKET TAKER.]

TICKET TAKER

[*Announcing.*]

The prosecuting attorney!

[HOMER *enters to the tune of "Tammany." He wears a long black robe. He receives a hearty round of applause, with a few hisses.*]

NEIL

Oh, it's you!

HOMER

[*Quietly.*]

I'll get you now, you dirty dog!

NEIL

I think not.

CADY

Come, come, we can't be all day at this. I've got to get back to the office. Now, just what were these murders all about?

HOMER

[*Reads from document. As* HOMER *begins to read Usher and Check Boy begin a whispered conversation that soon dominates the scene.*]

SIMULTANEOUSLY

HOMER	USHER
"On such and such a blank date, the defend-	Did you sell much candy?

ant, Neil Wadsworth McRae, did brutally murder, maim, assault, detroy, stab, injure, kill and cause the death of Gladys Virginia Cady, his wife; Mr. Cady, her father; Mrs. Cady, her mother, and Homer Cady, her brother, destroying one and all of the aforesaid Gladys Virginia Cady, his wife; Mr. Cady, her father; Mrs. Cady, her mother, and Homer Cady, her brother—by the use of a large paper knife, of bone manufacture and curious design, a picture of which appeared in the newspapers at the time."

[*Hands the newspaper containing the picture to* CADY.]

CHECK BOY

Sure—enough to buy a couple seats for the movies.

USHER

Oh, let's see the one up the street!

CHECK BOY

Oh, that's punk! You always want to see the sad ones.

USHER

I hate comedies.

CHECK BOY

Well, I hate sad ones.

NEIL

Quiet, please; some of us would like to hear the show!

[*They grudgingly leave the room.*]

CADY

Yes, I saw it. A great, big, long one. Exhibit A. [*He hands it to the foreman.*]

ALBERT

Exhibit A!

[*Passes it to the other jurors.*]

[*The other jurors repeat "Exhibit A," passing the newspaper from one to another.*]

HOMER

Having caused the death of the aforesaid and aforementioned people, I therefore call upon the Court to punish said Neil Wadsworth MacRae in one of two ways prescribed by law—death or hard labor for life, whichever they do in this state.

CADY

[*Realizing that maybe it's serious after all.*]

Oh, no! Is that so?

NEIL

[*Lightly.*]

Just wait!

CADY

[*To* HOMER.]

Yes. Just wait, please.

1ST JUROR

[*Leans toward his neighbor, with open program, and reads from it, as though confiding a bit of real news.*]

Say, this courtroom, with every seat occupied, can be emptied in less than three minutes.

CADY

Silence in the court!

[*A pause.*]

HOMER

The State rests.

[*He sits in the easy chair and is immediately seized with a fit of coughing.* MRS. CADY *instantly appears behind* HOMER; *she has her knitting, but no chair.*]

MRS. CADY

Are you all right, Homer?

HOMER

I guess so.

MRS. CADY

[*To the jury.*]

Homer's sick. He was always delicate. But he was a good boy though. When Homer wanted to be he was as good a boy as you'd find in a month of

Sundays. There was no reason on earth why Neil shouldn't have allowed him to live, just like a lot of other people are allowed to live. [*The jurors applaud her.*]

CADY

You are his mother?

MRS. CADY

Yes, sir. [CADY *shakes her hand, sympathetically.*]

CADY

You were also a victim, I believe?

MRS. CADY

That's right. [CADY *shakes her hand again.*] You heard how he did it? With a paper knife.

CADY

Oh, yes! You see, we're trying him today.

MRS. CADY

For the murders?

CADY

Yes.

MRS. CADY

Oh, I beg your pardon! [*Begins to back away in confusion.*] I wouldn't have intruded, if I'd known.

NEIL

Wait a minute! I'd like to have Mrs. Cady take the stand, please.

MRS. CADY

[*Flustered.*]

Who? Me?

NEIL

If you don't mind.

HOMER

What! Going to make her take the stand? A mother? [*There are hisses from the jury.*]

NEIL

Over here, please! [*Leads her to the witness box.*] Do you swear to tell the truth—the truth—and —the truth?

MRS. CADY

Yes.

NEIL

You can't tell the truth unless you raise your hand, you know.

MRS. CADY

No?

NEIL

No. [*She puts up her hand.*] You're Mrs. Cady, aren't you?

MRS. CADY

Yes. [*To* Mr. Cady.] Is that right, Fred?

CADY

Yes—that's all right.

NEIL

[*Suddenly wheeling on* MRS. CADY.]

Now then. [MRS. CADY *jumps.*] Where were you on Friday, June third?

MRS. CADY

Knitting. [*She suits the action to the word.*]

NEIL

But you used to sing in the choir, didn't you?

MRS. CADY

Oh, yes. [*Sings.*] "Just as I am, without one plea." [*The jurors stand and join in.* CADY *stops smoking for a moment and also sings a bar or two.*]

CADY

[*Suddenly rapping for order.*]

Silence in the court!

NEIL

[*Waves a warning finger at* MRS. CADY, *as though to intimate that another question is about to come.*]

Prove an alibi!

HOMER

I object, Your Honor!

CADY

Objection sustained and overruled! [*To* MRS. CADY.] Answer the question! [NEIL *smiles mockingly at* HOMER.]

MRS. CADY

What was it?

NEIL

Prove an alibi!

MRS. CADY

What kind?

NEIL

[*To* CADY.]
I didn't know there were different kinds.

CADY

Oh, yes—there are several kinds of alibis.

NEIL

Then prove any kind.

HOMER

Your Honor, I object!

CADY

You object?

HOMER

Yes! [*He goes to* NEIL *and looks sinisterly at him.*] I object to his looks!

NEIL

Why, what's the matter with them?

CADY

[*It is apparently a point of great import.*]

An objection has been raised to the prisoner's looks. [*Looks at* NEIL *carefully.*] Hm! Have you anything to say?

NEIL

Sir?

CADY

[*Quite casual.*]

Have you anything to say about your looks?

NEIL

Why—I think they're all right. [*There is a weighty pause.*]

CADY

This is a serious question. [*He removes his wig. The jury breaks out in chatter;* CADY *raps.*] Order, please! Now, the prisoner thinks that his looks are all right.

HOMER

But he can't prove it!

CADY

[*To* NEIL.]
Can you prove it?

NEIL

Why— [*Here's an awful situation!*]

CADY

You see, this is a court of law. Everything has to be proved.

NEIL

Well, well—can't the jury tell by looking?

[NEIL *looks toward the jury, which peers at him closely, but is puzzled. The jurors shake their heads, uncertain.*]

CADY

You see, it's illegal for a jury to know anything until it's been instructed. Now, as I understand it, the point is that you think your looks are all right?

NEIL

Yes.

CADY

But you can't prove it?

NEIL

[*If he can only have a moment's peace in which to think it over!*]

Oh, Lord! [*One of the jurors is noisily unwrapping a candy box.*] Quiet! Good heavens—how can I think if they're going to— Your Honor, they *must* be quiet!

CADY

Quiet!

THE JUROR

But it's candy! [*It is a big box full and it is passed up to the Judge.*]

CADY

Oh, really? [GLADYS *enters in a brilliant dinner gown and an ornate cloak.*]

GLADYS

Oh, candy! [*She crosses to the Judge's stand and begins rifling the box.*] Hello, Neil! I didn't mean to interrupt! I just ran in to get the boys! We're going dancing! [*Some of the jurors rise; one or two even begin climbing over the railing to join her.*] There's a big new place opening tonight and they're going to take me there! Got some money, papa?

CADY

Ten thousand enough? [*He gives her a handful of bills.*]

GLADYS

Oh, thanks. Come on, boys! [*The jurors make further gestures toward going.*]

NEIL

No, wait! [*All movement is suspended.*] You mean you want to take—*them*—away with you?

GLADYS

Of course!

NEIL

But—but I'm being tried for the murders. And if you take the jury away——

GLADYS

I'm sorry, Neil, but I couldn't miss the opening, could I? Are you ready? [*The jurors step toward her.*]

NEIL

No, no! [*Again the jurors halt.* NEIL *appeals to* CADY.] She can't do that, can she?

CADY

[*Who has been eating so much candy he has had little time for the trial's new aspect.*]

What?

NEIL

Take the jury away, right in the middle of things?

CADY

[*Licking his fingers.*]
She can if it's habeas corpus.

NEIL

[*Not at all sure.*]
Well—is it?

CADY

[*He licks his fingers.*]
It's beginning to look that way.

NEIL

But it isn't fair! They've got to hear my music. I know what I'll do! [*He faces* CADY.] I'll take it to a higher court!

CADY

[*Just a bit hurt.*]
Oh, don't you like this court?

NEIL

It isn't that. It's a good court, I guess, and the people are lovely, but——

CADY

About how high a one would you want?

NEIL

I'd want the highest I could get.

CADY

All right. [JUDGE CADY *slowly goes up in the air, as his stand grows two or three feet higher.*] Is this high enough for you?

NEIL

I guess so. Is this the superior court?

CADY

Oh, yes. Much superior. And more up-to-date. We send out all our verdicts by radio.

NEIL

She can't take them away with her now, can she —in this court?

CADY

Oh, no! You see, in a higher court the lower court is reversed.

NEIL

Good! [*The jurors resume their old positions.*]

GLADYS

Oh, the devil! Well, then I'll take Albert. He's only the foreman. [*She grabs* ALBERT *by the hand and leads him out of the courtroom.*]

CADY

[*Sucks a sticky thumb.*]

Well, are the rest of you ready to bring in a verdict? All in favor will say——

NEIL

No, wait! I'm not through—you haven't heard the music yet.

CADY

Oh, that's right! You're going to play for us.

NEIL

Of course. That's why I killed them, you know—on account of the music. I want to prove that I was justified. Listen! [*He goes to the piano.*] You won't blame me when you've heard the music. [*He strikes a chord.*] This is a symphony in C Minor. [*He starts to play. The result is disconnected, meaningless. There is a budding hissing from the jurors.* NEIL, *with a cry, jumps to his feet, holding up the torn sheet of music. He finds it almost impossible to speak.*] She destroyed it! She tore it up, and now I can't play it! Cynthia! Cynthia!

[CYNTHIA *appears at the piano. She is calm and sympathetic, as always.*]

CYNTHIA

Yes, dear?

NEIL

Cynthia, she tore up the symphony! I can't remember it, and they're waiting for me to play!

CYNTHIA

You still have the pantomime, haven't you?

NEIL

Yes.

CYNTHIA

Then play that for them instead. [*She finds the pantomime music.*] They'll think it's better, anyhow. [*Puts the music before him.*]

NEIL

But it isn't finished.

CYNTHIA

Well, now you *can* finish it.

NEIL

Can I?

CYNTHIA

Of course. It'll be all right, dear—you'll see.

NEIL

You—you think we ought to do it?

CYNTHIA

Of course.

NEIL

All right. [*He faces his inquisitors.*] Ladies and gentlemen, instead of the symphony, we're going to play a little pantomime, called "A Kiss in Xanadu" —written by Cynthia Mason and Neil McRae. We'll need quite a lot of room, so if you don't mind clearing the court— [*The Judge's dais and the witness box disappear. The jury box, too, moves into blackness.*] The scene is the royal palace in Xanadu. It's a night in June—one of those spring nights that you find only in Xanadu. Now, if you're all ready—music! [*The music of the pantomime begins.*] Cynthia, we ought to have a window to show what kind of night it is.

[*In the distance a great open window appears. Beyond a moonlit balustrade are flowers and trees and stars.*]

CYNTHIA

It's coming!

NEIL

Thanks! The scene is the bedchamber of the Prince and Princess. On the right is the bed of the Princess and on the left is the bed of the Prince.

[*Two fairy-tale beds appear from the darkness. They are canopied in pink. Above them are*

flower-draped testers that rise to golden points. NEIL *and* CYNTHIA *seat themselves at the piano and the pantomime begins.*]

A LORD OF THE BEDCHAMBER *and a* LADY OF THE BEDCHAMBER *enter and bow to each other ostentatiously. They are followed into the room by two small black pages, carrying tiny bed tables. The one for the Princess' bed bears a small lamp with a dainty shade. The Prince's has a candle and shade, and a small phonograph. As the* LORD *and* LADY *examine the room the pages go out and return with a pillow, which is placed at the foot of the Princess' bed, and a costumer, which is for the convenience of the Prince. The attendants convince themselves there are no intruders under the beds and depart. A clock strikes nine.*

The PRINCESS *enters. She is very beautiful, but very bored. The lovely night lures her to the window. She goes out on the little balcony and sighs. She is a married Princess. She returns to the bedchamber and snappishly commands the* LADY *to undress her. Nothing to do but go to bed! The* LADY *draws the curtains and leaves.*

The PRINCE *enters with his* LORD. *He would like to be a Gay Dog Prince and he twirls his mustache bravely. He, too, would like to find romance again, but here he is—a married Prince!*

A page puts his royal dressing gown and crown on the costumer. The LORD *attaches curlers to the royal mustache and leaves the* PRINCE. *The* PRINCE *turns on the phonograph and tries to do his Nightly Dozen. But the night outside distracts him. He goes to the window. It is too much for him. A second attempt to exercise is abandoned. He will go out to Adventure. If he turns the royal dressing gown inside out it should make a rather good disguise. He does so. The lining of the crown makes a serviceable cap. He tiptoes to the other bed. The* PRINCESS *is asleep. He draws the canopy across his own bed and steals out the window.*

CYNTHIA

But the Princess wants to go adventuring, too. I know! Let's have the moon wake her!

NEIL

Yes! Come on, moon! [*The moon obligingly sends its beams across the bed of the Princess.*] Thank you!

The pantomime proceeds. The PRINCESS' *head pops through the draperies. It is such a beautiful night! She observes the closed canopy of her lord's bed. He is asleep—the dull, conventional*

husband. She goes to the window. What a night! Romance lies out there. She hesitates. She decides. Frightened, but determined, she takes a cover from her bed. An excellent shawl it makes! But something is wrong. She stands undecided, her hands touching her lovely hair. The music stops.

NEIL

We skipped a place here. We're got to disguise the Princess. She mustn't be recognized, either, you know.

CYNTHIA

Of course not. I have it! Let her put on her lamp-shade for a bonnet!

NEIL

And she can use the Prince's candle-shade for a mask!

The music starts again and the PRINCESS *dons the lamp-shade and puts two finger holes through the candle-shade. She is very happy and goes out to the trees and stars. There is darkness—and here we are in a public park in Xanadu. There are a good many flowery bushes to be seen, but they are not noticed by the* PRINCE, *who sits, depressed, on a park bench, under a street lamp. A* POLICE-

MAN, *a* LAMPLIGHTER *and two small attendants enter on patrol, and sedately go about their business. The* PRINCESS *comes into the park. A man, a romantic-looking man, even if he is masked by that upturned coat collar! A girl, a charming girl, even if she is holding a small mask before her eyes! She skips away, but returns. She drops her handkerchief. She quietly and politely sneezes. He springs to her aid with her handkerchief. She sits beside him on the bench. He plucks a rose from the bush behind them and offers it timidly. She tosses it away. The light in the lamp is much too bright. A mighty puff from the* PRINCE *and it goes out. But the* WATCH *returns. The lamp is relighted. The* PRINCE *and the* PRINCESS *sit a little closer. He offers another rose. This time she accepts it. But that lamp! He has a permanent solution. He breaks the lamp in two. Masks are not needed in the darkness, but the moon comes up. He waves it away. She kisses him. A clock strikes five. The sun rises. The adventure is over. She runs away. He calls, but she does not answer. He picks up the rose she spurned. His grief is covered by considerate darkness.*

Once more it is the Royal bedchamber. The PRINCESS *creeps into the room and into bed. The*

PRINCE *steals in a moment later. He goes to the* PRINCESS' *bed. Still asleep! He goes to his bed. The clock strikes eight. The* LORD *and* LADY *arrive. The pages fetch a breakfast table. The royal pair are awakened. They sit down to eat. She starts to pour her husband's coffee. Oh, yes, she had forgotten! She rises and offers a cheek to be kissed. He mechanically obliges. They sit down again. But they cannot eat. The music of the night is still with them. They steal wistful looks at the window. The* PRINCESS *looks at the rose He gave her. The* PRINCE *looks at the one She first refused. The flowers are stealthily put away. The* PRINCE *and the* PRINCESS *unfold their napkins. It is the humdrum life once more.*

[*The curtain falls, slowly. Then, slowly, the footlights go down, plunging the auditorium into complete darkness. Immediately we hear the verdict from the vastly Superior Court—sent out, as* JUDGE CADY *had said, by radio. It comes, through magnifiers, from the rear of the auditorium, and takes the form of loud and derisive laughter, punctuated by cries of "Rotten!" "No good!" "Highbrow!" "Terrible!" In the darkness the curtain again rises. Seated cross-legged on* NEIL'S *piano, still in the red wig and with a red light playing on him, is* JUDGE CADY.

As always, he is smoking a cigar. NEIL *sits facing him on the piano stool.*]

CADY

[*To the invisible voices.*]

Silence! [*The voices stop.*] Now, was that what you wanted to show us?

NEIL

Yes, sir.

CADY

Well, of course we don't want to hurt your feelings, Neil, but I'm afraid it's a little bit highbrow. Don't you think so?

NEIL

No, sir. Not very.

CADY

Well, I don't think it's what they want. [*To the unseen jurors.*] How about it?

[*A single voice comes over the radio. It says "Rotten!"*]

CADY

Are you ready to bring in a verdict?

FIRST JUROR'S VOICE

Yes, I move we bring in a verdict!

SECOND JUROR'S VOICE

I second the motion!

FIRST JUROR'S VOICE

It is moved and seconded that we bring in a verdict. Remarks? [*A pause.*] All those in favor say "Aye."

CHORUS OF VOICES

Aye!

FIRST JUROR'S VOICE

Opposed—"No?" [*Pause.*] The motion is carried.

CADY

Well, what sort of a verdict do you want to bring in? There are several kinds of verdicts.

FIRST JUROR'S VOICE

I move we bring in a verdict of guilty!

SECOND JUROR'S VOICE

I second that motion!

FIRST JUROR'S VOICE

It is moved and seconded that we bring in a verdict of guilty. Remarks? All those in favor say "Aye."

CHORUS OF VOICES

Aye!

FIRST JUROR'S VOICE

Opposed—"No?" [*Pause.*] Well, I guess the motion's carried.

CADY

See, Neil? I told you so.

NEIL

Well—well, what are you going to do with me?

CADY

This thing of using the imagination has got to stop. We're going to make you work in the right way. You see, your talents belong to us now, and we're going to use every bit of them. We're going to make you the most wonderful song writer that ever lived.

NEIL

But I can't write that kind of music! You know I can't!

CADY

You can do it by our system. You are sentenced to be at the Cady Consolidated Art Factory at eight o'clock tomorrow morning!

NEIL

Art factory?

CADY

At eight o'clock tomorrow morning!

[*The lights slowly dim and fade out, and instantly there is a burst of noise. Pianos are playing discordantly; there is the sound of machinery in the distance, a voice is singing a jazz tune, and other voices are heard in loud declamation. The lights go up again on a tier of four cells. In the first a man is dictating to a stenographer; in the second* NEIL *is working away at a piano, while a youth in a belted coat and a straw hat, atilt on his head, sings to the accompaniment of* NEIL'S *music; in the third cell an artist works before an easel, and in the fourth a young man is loudly reciting poetry, apparently moved to do so by the posturings of two other youths who are in the cell with him. After a moment of this pandemonium a guide enters, followed by three visitors. All four are dancing teachers, so far as outward appearances go, but they are marked apart by the fact that the guide wears an official-looking cap, and the visitors carry umbrellas and open Baedekers. The guide raises his voice for silence; a gong sounds somewhere, and all activity ceases. The figures in the cages come down to the bars and stand waiting.*]

GUIDE

Now this, gentlemen, is the manufacturing department. In this studio—[*he indicates the first*]—we have Walter Carp Smith, the world's greatest novelist——

NOVELIST

[*More or less routine.*]

How are you?

GUIDE

[*Passing to the second cage.*]

In this studio, Neil McRae, the world's greatest composer!

NEIL

[*Listlessly.*]

How are vou?

GUIDE

[*At the third cage.*]

In this one, Finley Jamison, the world's greatest magazine artist!

ARTIST

How are you?

GUIDE

[*At the fourth cage.*]

And in this, James Lee Wrex, the world's greatest poet!

POET

How are you?

GUIDE

[*Indicating the unseen cages beyond.*]

The studios beyond are devoted to science and religion. Mr. Cady was the first person in the world to put religion up in ten-cent packages, selling direct to the consumer.

FIRST VISITOR

You don't say so!

GUIDE

He also prides himself on having the largest output of literature and music in the world. He's going to open two more plants the first of the month. Now, would you like to see how these men work?

FIRST VISITOR

Yes, indeed! [*Goes toward the first cage.*] Did you say this was the novelist?

GUIDE

The world's greatest. Author of more than two thousand published works.

FIRST VISITOR

What an imagination!

GUIDE

Yes, sir, none at all. Now if you're ready, I'll show you how he works. Go!

NOVELIST

[*Begins at once to dictate from a book in his hand.*]

"Something closely resembling a tear fell from the old patrician's cheek. 'Margaret,' he cried, 'the people of the West have learned to love you, too.' 'Jackie boy,' she whispered. 'They have made you governor after all.' Far off on the—the—" [*he hesitates; the stenographer takes up the story.*]

STENOGRAPHER

"—desert, the caravan faded away. Night took them in its arms and a great hush fell on the forest. The two lovers——"

GUIDE

Stop! [*He turns to the visitors.*] There you are!

FIRST VISITOR

Was *she* writing it?

GUIDE

Oh, no! Sometimes she gets a little ahead of him, that's all.

FIRST VISITOR

Isn't he wonderful!

GUIDE

Forty-five minutes after he finishes a novel we

have it printed and assembled and on its way to the movie men.

FIRST VISITOR

May we talk to him?

GUIDE

Certainly.

FIRST VISITOR

[*To the novelist.*]

I've enjoyed your novels very much.

NOVELIST

Thank you.

FIRST VISITOR

I see you're writing a new one.

NOVELIST

Of course. I'm under contract.

FIRST VISITOR

What's that?

[*Indicating the book in the novelist's hand.*]

NOVELIST

It's my last one.

FIRST VISITOR

But weren't you just dictating from it, for your new one?

NOVELIST

Yes. They like it that way.

GUIDE

Under the old system they wrote it all new each time. Here—let the gentleman have it as a souvenir.

FIRST VISITOR

[*Reading the title.*]

"Eternal Love." What's your new one called?

NOVELIST

"Love Eternal."

GUIDE

Don't forget—you're lecturing at three o'clock at Wanamaker's.

SECOND VISITOR

Say, will you show us how the artist works?

GUIDE

Certainly. What will you have—a cover or an advertisement?

SECOND VISITOR

What's the difference?

GUIDE

There isn't any.

SECOND VISITOR

Well, then, I'll take an advertisement.

GUIDE

All right. Go!

[*The Artist draws without looking at the canvas. He hands it to the guide, who hands it to the visitor. The canvas is blank.*]

There you are!

SECOND VISITOR

What beautiful eyes!

THIRD VISITOR

Wonderful!

GUIDE

Do you want to talk to him?

SECOND VISITOR

Oh, thanks. I suppose it'll be used on a magazine?

ARTIST

Oh, yes—thousands.

SECOND VISITOR

Must be worth five or six hundred dollars.

ARTIST

[*Bored to death.*]

Thirty-five hundred.

FIRST VISITOR

You don't say so!

GUIDE

And here, gentlemen, is our poet. His "Jolly Jingles" are printed in three million newspapers a day.

FIRST VISITOR

[*Pointing to the men in back.*]

Who are those men?

GUIDE

Those are his models. He is the only poet in the world who works from living models. That's why all his poetry is so true, so human. He'll show you. Go!

POET

I will now write a friendship poem. [*Motions to his models.*] Friendliness No. 3, please. "Friendship."

[*The models strike a pose, hands clasped.*]

[*The poet recites.*]

"Goodbye, old pal; hello, old pal; the greatest pal
I ever knew.
A dog's your finest friend, my lad, when all the world
is blue."

SECOND VISITOR

Ain't it human?

GUIDE

And here, gentlemen, is Mr. Neil McRae, America's foremost composer.

FIRST VISITOR

Who's that in back?

GUIDE

That's his lyric writer. You will now see how they work. What kind of a song will it be, McRae?

NEIL

A pathetic. [*Sits at the piano.*]

GUIDE

A pathetic. Go! [NEIL *plays.*]

SINGER

[*In a horrible voice.*]
"You've broken my heart like you broke my heart,
So why should you break it again?"
[NEIL *comes to the bars again.*]

GUIDE

That will sell one and one-half million.

SECOND VISITOR

I suppose you write other kinds of songs, too?

NEIL

Oh, yes—mammies, sweeties and fruit songs. The ideas are brought from the inspiration department every hour on the hour. After I turn them into music they are taken to the purifying department, and then to the testing and finishing rooms. They are then packed for shipment.

FIRST VISITOR

A wonderful system!

THIRD VISITOR

I should say so!

SECOND VISITOR

Do you work all the time?

NEIL

No, the night shift comes on at eight.

FIRST VISITOR

How long have you been here?

NEIL

For years and years.

SECOND VISITOR

Say, will you write another song for us—just as a souvenir?

NEIL

[*Desperately.*]
Oh, why don't you all go away?

GUIDE

What's that? What was that? You get busy there and write another song!

NEIL

No! I've been writing forever—I'm tired of it.

GUIDE

Do you want me to call Mr. Cady?

NEIL

I don't care! I don't care what you do!

GUIDE

I'll give you one more chance.

NEIL

No! I won't!

GUIDE

All right, then! Mr. Cady! Mr. Cady!

[*The Guide rushes out. The visitors slink away. A gong sounds. Those in the cages huddle in fear.* MR. CADY *appears behind the cages. He carries a large snake whip.*]

CADY

What's the matter here?

GUIDE

McRae says he won't go on!

CADY

He won't, eh? Well, we'll see about that!

NEIL

I can't go on! I'm tired!

CADY

What's that got to do with it? You've got to go on!

NEIL

I *can't*, I tell you. I *can't* keep on at this sort of thing.

CADY

You know your sentence, don't you? You've got to work our way until you die.

NEIL

[*Dully.*]

Yes, I know.

CADY

We own you now. The family. The family owns you. [*He falls into rhythmic measure.*]

You take our money and you live our life,
  We own you, we own you.
You take our money and you live our life,
  We own you, we own you.
You take our money and you live our way,
  We pay the piper and we tell him what to play.
You sold your soul and you can't get away,
  We own you, we own you.

[*The* CADY *family and others enter at back, and weave back and forth joining in the chant, reaching through the bars at* NEIL.]

NEIL

Until I die! I can be free from you if I die! I *can* die! You can't keep me from it! That's how I can get away from you! Open the door! Open the door!

[*He shakes the door on the audience's side of the cage. It opens.*]

It was never locked! [*He steps out and closes the door.* CYNTHIA *enters.*] Cynthia, Cynthia, I'm free! I can die! [*Those in the background disappear.*] Cynthia, how are we going to do it?

CYNTHIA

We'll go to an executioner. I know a good one. You mustn't be afraid. It won't hurt. [*An Execu-*

tioner appears masked, with a black robe and a huge paper knife.] See—it's Jerry!

JERRY

Hello, Mr. McRae. [*Takes off his mask and cap.*]

NEIL

Oh, hello, Jerry! You're going to do it, are you?

JERRY

Sure. [*Feels the edge of his knife.*]

NEIL

Oh, that's good.

CYNTHIA

Do we have to wait long?

JERRY

No—you're next.

NEIL

Oughtn't we to have a block?

CYNTHIA

[*Moving the armchair.*]
We'll use this. It'll be more comfortable.

NEIL

Oh! And you'll stay with me?

CYNTHIA

Always. [*She stands beside him.*] But it won't hurt. [ALBERT *enters, wearing a short medical apron and jacket.*] Albert will give you a pill.

NEIL

Oh, yes! Hello, Albert!

ALBERT

Hello, Neil! Got a glass of water?

CYNTHIA

[*Glass of water in hand.*]

We're ready, Doctor. [*Albert goes to the chair; tests its strength.*]

ALBERT

[*To the Executioner.*]

Is the light all right? [*The cabaret orchestra is heard in the distance.*]

JERRY

I think so.

NEIL

There's that music again.

ALBERT

You're nervous, that's all. Here! [NEIL *swallows a pill.*]

CYNTHIA

Now it can't possibly hurt you.

ALBERT

[*Motions* NEIL *to the chair.*]

Here we are! [NEIL *sits.*] That's it—way back. [*To* JERRY.] Right?

NEIL

Shall I take off my collar?

ALBERT

Oh, no. There's room, I think.

NEIL

Just a once-through, please.

ALBERT

Of course. It'll be all over in a minute.

NEIL

Cynthia!

CYNTHIA

Yes.

NEIL

I was afraid you'd gone.

CYNTHIA

No, dear. [JERRY *taps his knife on floor.*] Are you ready, Neil?

NEIL

Yes, except for that music. Charles the First didn't have any music. [*The lights begin to fade.*]

CYNTHIA

He's ready, Doctor.

NEIL

Don't go away, Cynthia!

ALBERT

All ready. [JERRY *taps the knife again on the floor.*]

NEIL

Goodbye! I'll see you soon.

CYNTHIA

Are you comfortable?

NEIL

Yes. You'll be with me always, won't you, Cynthia? [*There is darkness, save for a cloudy moving light on* NEIL.]

CYNTHIA

Always.

ALBERT

All right.

NEIL

Cynthia, are you there?

CYNTHIA

Yes, darling.

[*There is a hum of voices. Presently one can discern several chanting, "You take our money and you lead our life."* MRS. CADY *is heard saying, "Homer's sick."* MR. CADY *is apparently telephoning somewhere. He is shouting, "Well, I'll tell you what to do!"* HOMER'S *voice repeats, "You dirty dog!"* GLADYS *shrilly calls out, "He's learning to dance!" The voices become a chant, finally unintelligible. The lights slowly go up again. We are back in* NEIL'S *apartment. He is asleep in his chair. It is sunset. There is a knock, a real knock, on the door.*]

NEIL

[*Half asleep.*]

Yes? [CYNTHIA *enters.*]

CYNTHIA

Is anything the matter, Neil? I thought I heard you talking.

NEIL

It didn't hurt. Was it a success?

CYNTHIA

Neil, are you all right?

NEIL

[*Takes her hand.*]

I need you, Cynthia!

CYNTHIA

Oh, Neil, do you? Are you sure you do? I—I couldn't stay away, Neil. I tried to, but I couldn't. Because I need you, too. I just couldn't give you up to anyone else on earth.

NEIL

Cynthia, dear.

CYNTHIA

It wouldn't have worked, Neil—with those people. Don't you know it wouldn't?

NEIL

I think I do.

CYNTHIA

I've been sitting out on a bench in the square, trying to think out what it would mean—what it would do to you.

NEIL

I know. Widgets.

CYNTHIA

That would be worse for you than any amount of poverty.

NEIL

Poverty in our cottage.

CYNTHIA

Did you think of a cottage, too?

NEIL

Of course—I lived there.

CYNTHIA

We could manage. I know quite a lot about raising chickens.

NEIL

[*Reminiscently.*]

A little red hen and a little dun cow.

CYNTHIA

Yes, we might have a cow. Have you been thinking about it, too? [*Rises.*]

NEIL

Well—let's say dreaming. [*He rises and goes to the desk.*] It was terrible, Cynthia—do you know, I dreamed I was married to *her?*

CYNTHIA

To Gladys?

NEIL

When I thought you didn't care, I was hurt and angry. And I dreamed she telephoned—— [*Sees the receiver off the hook.*] My God! Did she telephone! Oh, Cynthia, it's real! I *did* do it! I did!

CYNTHIA

Did what?

NEIL

I did ask her to marry me!

CYNTHIA

Neil! You didn't! And she—accepted you?

NEIL

Yes.

CYNTHIA

Oh, Neil.

[*A knock at the door.* JERRY *puts his head in. He wears a uniform somewhat like the one that accompanied him through the dream.*]

JERRY

It's me, Jerry. I've been ringing your phone for the last five minutes. Yeh, I thought so—you left it off the hook again. [NEIL *replaces the receiver.*] The young lady that came before was waiting, so I brought her right up.

GLADYS

[*In the doorway.*]

It's me, Neil—may I come in? [*Enters.*] Oh, hello again, Miss Mason!

CYNTHIA

I—I forgot my tea things. [*Half choking, she takes up her tray of tea things.*]

GLADYS

Well, here we are. Isn't it exciting! We're engaged.

NEIL

Yes.

GLADYS

Did you have a good nap?

NEIL

Yes, thank you.

GLADYS

[*Obviously something on her mind.*]

Do you love me a lot, Neil? Enough to do me a great big favor?

NEIL

What?

GLADYS

It's a big one, and maybe you won't want to do it.

NEIL

What is it?

GLADYS

Well, it's this way. Coming back from the dressmaker's I met Walter Craig. I told you about him, didn't I? He's a boy that sort of used to like me.

NEIL

Oh, yes.

GLADYS

Now, mind you, Neil, you can say "No" to this if you want to, but—he said, "What are you doing tonight?" Now, you won't be angry, Neil?

NEIL

No, no.

GLADYS

Well, then he said he didn't know any other girl in New York, and would I sort of play around with him this week. So all I wondered was—well—you know how a fellow is—if he thinks a girl's engaged, why, he won't come near her at all. Now mind, you don't have to do it—and I won't be a bit hurt if you don't, but what I thought was—if we could start being engaged, say, a week from today—you wouldn't mind, would you, Neil? Of course, next week, after we *are* engaged, we'll just go everywhere together.

NEIL

I see.

GLADYS

I know a dozen people, pretty near, that'll give big parties for us. It's an awful lot of fun, being engaged.

NEIL

Is it? I'm afraid I wouldn't fit in with that sort of thing.

GLADYS

Why, half the fun of being engaged is—well——

NEIL

Gladys, just what is your idea of being engaged?

GLADYS

Why—I've just been telling you. [NEIL *smiles.*] What's the matter?

NEIL

Well, it's just that your idea of an engagement is different from mine.

GLADYS

What is yours?

NEIL

I think I'd want to be somewhere alone, just the two of us, where we could talk.

GLADYS

Talk about what?

NEIL

[*With a meaning look.*]

I don't know.

GLADYS

You don't mean you'd *always* be like that, do you? I mean, when you're married?

NEIL

I might.

GLADYS

Well, where would I come in? Do you mean you'd expect *me* to sit around *every* evening and—just talk? I did think you'd be willing to—play around the way other people do.

NEIL

I see.

GLADYS

But, of course, if you wouldn't—well—why—there doesn't seem to be much sense in our being engaged, does there?

NEIL

It's to be just as you say, Gladys.

GLADYS

Well, I don't think we're exactly suited to each

other—if you think it over. Honestly, I don't. Do you?

NEIL

No, Gladys.

GLADYS

I noticed the difference the minute I saw Walter again! I can kind of let myself go with Walter. You're sure you don't think I'm a quitter?

NEIL

I think you're all right.

GLADYS

And we'll still be friends, won't we? I've always thought you were nice, Neil. [*She gives a sigh.*] It's a sort of a relief, isn't it?

NEIL

Yes, it is—rather.

GLADYS

Well, goodbye. I've got to go because I left Walter downstairs. [*She departs.*]

NEIL

Oh! [*Laughs. Starts to call out.*] Cyn—[*Looks across the hall, crosses to the piano and begins to play the music of the pantomime.*]

[*After a moment* CYNTHIA *comes slowly into the room.*]

CYNTHIA

[*Hesitatingly.*]
Want me, Neil?

NEIL

Do I want you? [*He continues playing as he hears her approaching.*]

CURTAIN

Date Due

TRENT UNIVERSITY
0 1164 0049146 4

PS3521 .A727B4 1924
Kaufman, George Simon
Beggar on horseback.

DATE	ISSUED TO

224972

224972